UNIVERSITY OF
LINCOLN

You Can Go Your Own Way: Exploring the professional characteristics of modern day further education teachers

Theresa Marie Marriott

A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements of the University of Lincoln for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

December 2019

Contents

Abstract

The central aim of this research was to determine if Further Education (FE) teaching could be classed as a profession and how this impacted on FE teachers' professional identities. This research explored the concept of teacher professionalism and professional identities within the FE sector. It examined the relationship between normative accounts of professionalism and FE teachers' professional identities, and investigated where FE teachers' professional standing positioned itself within the education sector. Previous research indicated that accounts of FE teacher professionalism were tenuous, and not fully engaged with by the individuals at which they were aimed. Another contention was whether within the literature FE teaching could be considered a profession in its own right when compared to traditional indicators of a profession from prominent authors in the subject area. These 'issues' provided a tangible link to Foucault's work on 'problematisation' which was utilised as a tool to facilitate strong discussion within the research.

The qualitative research approach, grounded in an interpretive paradigm, involved a single representational case study which was an FE provider situated in the north of England. Methods used to collect data were a pilot questionnaire, exploratory questionnaire, two focus groups, and unstructured interviews. Additionally, document analysis was undertaken on policy and regulations relating to teacher professionalism ranging from 1960 to 2014, alongside key literature on models of professionalism; this was to provide a through contextual background of the vast and successive changes within the sector which occurred over a relatively short time period. FE teachers' personal narratives were thematically analysed and showed strong associations with issues on the distribution of power, and the complexities of professional identities within FE which were similarly reflected in the literature.

The findings suggested that FE teachers were unclear about their professional identities and were adopting a 'pick and mix' approach to their professionalism, utilising normative accounts of professionalism from other sectors and professions to support their ideas. FE teachers demonstrated that their professional identities are fragmented and complex which impacts on their acceptance and recognition as professionals in their own right. Furthermore, their work appeared to be more aligned with being recognised as an occupation, which tries to act professionally, rather than a profession in its own right.

Key words: Further education teachers, Further education professionalism, Further education professional standards, Further education professional identity, Further education teacher professional behaviours.

Dedication

I would like to dedicate this work to my ever supportive husband, Richard, and my daughter Holly. Without their continuous encouragement, sympathy, and chauffeuring I would not have made it. They believed in me when I did not believe in myself, and for that I will always be thankful.

Special thanks goes to my late nana, Norma, who nurtured my love of learning and encouraged me to be inquisitive, creative, and interested in the world around me. You are always in my thoughts, and I hope that my achievements make you proud.

I would also like to thank the rest of my family and friends who believed in me, and still do. I promise I will make you proud as the first member of our family to have a PhD.

Acknowledgements

Firstly, I am indebted to the FE teachers who provided their voices during this research so willingly and honestly. Your ideas and opinions have really illuminated what it looks and feels like being a professional teacher in such a diverse sector; passion and commitment for the work that you do consistently shines through and students are very lucky to have you as their teachers.

My sincere thanks goes to my ever helpful and empathetic supervisor, Dr Joss Winn. He has gently steered me into 'Doctoralness' and encouraged me to keep going during times of adversity; steadfast and true. Thank you for challenging me in the world of academia, I have come a long way during these studies and your guidance will always be appreciated.

Special thanks also goes to Dr Andrea Abbas who was there at the start of my journey and believed I could make a significant contribution to the sector with my research. Thank you for being there in the background keeping a watchful eye.

Professor Angela Thody also deserves a mention for her highly engaging and thoughtful sessions during study schools. Many thanks for showing me that there are others out there who are creative and not afraid to do something different as a teacher; the penguins game will always stick in my mind.

I would not have been able to have navigated the administration side of the PhD without Bev Potterton; an absolute angel who is a font of knowledge and highly proactive in problem solving. Thank you, Bev, for all your support as an off campus student; you've been invaluable to me and your reassurance has been a comfort throughout my studies.

The whole team in the School of Education deserve a special thank you for their approachability and generally being helpful in any way they can. Their friendly manner and flexible approach towards me really helped over these past six years and future students are very lucky to have such a great team supporting them.

Being part of the PhD community at the university has been really reassuring, thank you to my fellow students who have shared their struggles and successes; your insights gave me the strength to carry on, your ideas were also very welcome.

The start of this journey, I owe to Andrew Tofts. Andrew encouraged me to continue my studies after completing initial teacher training and said 'why stop now?' after I completed my BA Hons. Thank you, Andrew, for giving me the confidence to do more, I am finally going to stop now!

I wish to express gratitude to the University of Hull, mainly Mike, for allowing me the time and space to write my thesis and present tentative findings at conferences. As an employee this has been gratefully utilised and I have

appreciated allowances made within my workplace to undertake higher level studies.

Finally, there are two friends who will now get a well-deserved rest from my PhD; Kate and Mary. You both have listened to me, comforted me, and acted as rocks when I struggled. I am truly grateful for all you have done, just being there has helped me immensely; I hope I can be as supportive towards you in your studies as you have both been to me.

List of Figures

List of Tables

List of Abbreviations

AELP	The Association of Employment and Learning Providers
ALI	The Adult Learning Inspectorate
AoC	The Association of Colleges
ATL	The Association of Teachers and Lecturers
ATS	Advanced Teacher Status
BECTA	The British Educational Communications and Technology Agency
BERA	The British Educational Research Association
CATE	The Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education
CBI	The Confederation of British Industry
CCT	The Chartered College of Teaching
CE	Compulsory Education
CIF	The Common Inspection Framework
CPAC	The Commons Public Accounts Committee
CPD	Continuous/Continuing/ Professional Development
CTS	Chartered Teacher Status
CWDC	The Children's Workforce Development Council
DBIS	The Department for Business, Innovation and Skills
DfE	The Department for Education
DfEE	The Department for Employment and Education
DfES	The Department for Education and Skills
EMA	Education Maintenance Allowance
ETF	The Education and Training Foundation
FE	Further Education
FEFC	The Further Education Funding Council
FENTO	The Further Education National Training Organisation
FG	Focus Group
FT	Full time
GDPR	The General Data Protection Regulation
GTC	The General Teaching Council
HE	Higher Education
HEA	The Higher Education Academy (also known as Advance HE)
HESA	The Higher Education Statistics Agency
HMI	Her Majesty's Inspectorate
HMSO	Her Majesty's Stationery Office
HND	Higher National Diplomas
HSE	The Health and Safety Executive
ICO	The Information Commissioner's Office
IfL	The Institute for Learning
ITT	Initial Teacher Training
LEA	Local Education Authority
LLUK	Lifelong Learning UK
LSN	The Learning and Skills Network
LSC	The Learning and Skills Council
MORI	Market and Opinion Research International
NEET	Not in Education, Employment or Training
NEU	The National Education Union

NFER	The National Foundation for Educational Research
NIACE	The National Institute of Adult Continuing Education
NQT	Newly Qualified Teacher
NRA	National Record of Achievement
NUT	The National Union of Teachers
OECD	The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
Ofsted	The Office for Standards in Education
Ofqual	The Office of Qualifications and Examinations Regulation
PCET	Post Compulsory Education and Training (Sector)
PGCE	Post Graduate Certificate in Education
PT	Part time
QCDA	The Qualifications and Curriculum Development Agency
QT	Qualified Teacher
QTS	Qualified Teacher Status
QTLS	Qualified Teaching and Learning Status
SEN	Special Educational Needs
SKOPE	The Centre on Skills, Knowledge and Organisational Performance
TDA	The Training and Development Agency for Schools
TEC	Training and Enterprise Councils
TRA	The Teaching Regulation Agency
TSO	The Stationery Office
TTA	The Teacher Training Agency
TUC	The Trades Union Congress
TVEI	The Technical and Vocational Education Initiative
UCU	The University and College Union
UKPSF	UK Professional Standards Framework
UNESCO	The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
UQT	Unqualified Teacher
YPLA	The Young People’s Learning Agency

Chapter 1. Introduction

1.0.0 Introduction

> *The idea of professionalism, it's been changed to what is suitable in the current climate. I agree, that everyone should reach a certain standard in education themselves, and qualification of skill but that only matters if it's the current trend* (Anna, QT).

Anna's reflections on 'professionalism', illustrate the complexities and difficulties teachers in further education (FE) are facing regarding their professional identities in an ever-changing landscape. Over the last 20 years, the sector has been subject to constant change and close scrutiny, responding rapidly to provide education and training for a wide audience (Duckworth and Tummons, 2010). This research took place during a period of substantial change in the sector (2007-2012), when for the first time FE teachers were catapulted into public view regarding all aspects of their work. As an insider during this period, the confusion and uncertainty I experienced as an FE teacher raised serious questions about my professional identity in the sector where there appeared to be no concrete answers or standard points of reference. In undertaking this research, I wanted to explore the attributes of the FE profession, if indeed it is one and how FE teachers understand themselves in relation to their work.

Interest in this particular subject area stemmed from personal experience of working within FE as a teacher for over 15 years, and a Teaching and Learning Coach for three years. In these roles I experienced wide ranging perceptions of professionalism and the role of a teacher from both inside and outside of the sector; this insider position drove forward strong objectivity in this specific subject area (Harding, 1995). It has been interesting to observe, in my former position as a Teaching and Learning Coach and a Teaching Enhancement Officer, the variance in understanding of professionalism when applied to the FE teaching role, particularly whilst working with teachers who were new to the role or classed as underperforming. Between myself, and those who I have worked alongside, there have been competing and conflicting ideas of what constitutes a professional teacher and how this translates into practice. This has caused me to reflect upon what teachers in FE believe professionalism to

be and how they enact it both inside and outside of their working environments. Additionally, who and what they refer to as their point of reference in identifying their professionalism is important as it may affect or impact on professional performance and perceptions of value for the role they undertake.

1.1.0 Research Aims and Questions

For FE teachers, new and experienced, this unsettling period in the sector appeared to be particularly unstable with regard to their professional identity. The main aims of the research were: to explore how FE teachers shape their professional identities; identify surrounding factors and influences which they use to orientate themselves professionally within the sector; and evaluate if FE teaching in its current form can be defined distinctly as a profession or occupation. The objectives of this research were to identify if there were any opportunities for FE teacher professional identity to be improved and contribute to developing the discourse on FE teacher professionalism by providing FE teachers a voice through this work.

Within the field of FE teacher professionalism there were a number of important areas to explore where the literature was unclear, and some questions remained unanswered. These areas of ambiguity were utilised to develop and form the research questions which underpinned the study (Table 1):

1. How do normative accounts of a profession shape FE teacher professionalism?

2a. What is FE teacher professional identity?

b. Who/what are the influences on FE teacher professionalism?

3. How do FE teachers think and act professionally?

These were all important areas of enquiry as currently FE teachers are operating in a period of instability due to sector deregulation of FE teacher qualifications in 2012 and an ‘opt in’ approach for professional membership and associated recognition as a result. Critics of deregulation observe that the sector’s professional standing has rapidly declined in the last 20 years, and

there also appears to be a loss of credibility for FE teachers with a lack of credible gatekeeping in place (Edward et al., 2005; Gleeson et al., 2004).

No.	Research Question	Methods	Data	Theoretical Framework
1	**How do normative accounts of a profession shape FE teacher professionalism?**	Literature review Document analysis Mixed methods questionnaire Focus groups Individual interviews	Thematic data review and analysis	**Macdonald's** Sociology of the professions linked to the type of work rather than the definition **Friedson's** Professionalism model – The Third Logic: The concept of specialised knowledge > provision of important services > power and control in own work **Hoyle's** criteria of a profession – theory of the educational professional **Greenwood's** characteristics of a professional
2a	**What is FE teacher professional identity?**			
2b	**Who/what are the influences on FE teacher professionalism?**			As above and utilisation of **Foucault's themes** on: Truth/knowledge, Identity, Autonomy, Power/Control
3	**How do FE teachers think and act professionally?**			As above

Table 1. – Research plan showing the relationship between the research questions, theoretical frameworks, methodology and methods.

1.2.0 Research Context

In addition to exploring professional constructs for FE teachers, the research critically reviewed policy and practice in the FE sector and how this influences the way FE teachers behave and form their professional identities. The study also attempted to establish a connection between normative accounts of a

profession, and professionalism, through personal accounts from FE teachers. Furthermore, it considered the influence of the government, professional bodies, other stakeholders, and FE teachers themselves on how professional constructs are accepted and rejected by those that work in FE as they build and develop their professional identities. FE teacher personal and professional narratives were explored to determine if there is a link between forming individual professional identities in the absence of formal requirements for teaching in the sector. Summatively, this research will provide a detailed and informative account of how FE teachers form, view and perceive their professional identities whilst working in a changing sector.

Within this area of investigation, there is a considerable amount of government literature which tries to define FE teacher professionalism and position FE teaching as a profession in its own right; in contrast there are also those who view it as a vocation or occupation. There is substantial evidence from the literature that there is no clear definition or framework of what an FE teaching professional is. The only clear commonality within the literature is the incongruence regarding definitions and categorisation of FE teaching related to being defined as a profession, and the corresponding characteristics of professional behaviours. This research seeks to unpick the attributes of a profession and an occupation to determine which FE teaching most closely aligns with.

1.3.0 FE Teacher Professionalism: The Wider Context

Over the last 50 years, a significant amount of research has been conducted into theories and models of professions and professionalism. This research focuses on the foundational work of Freidson (2004), Hoyle (1972) and Greenwood (1957) in the first instance as their models and theories on professions and professionalism are well established, widely cited and offer opportunities for transferability for FE teachers. Within their work there is significant overlap in their identifiers of professions and models of professionalism (Table 1) and these provide a robust framework to compare the characteristics and traits of FE teachers in order to explore how, and if,

they are in alignment with normative accounts of a profession and professionalism.

In recent years, the professionalisation, de-professionalisation, and re-professionalisation of FE teachers has garnered increasing interest from the government and the public, mainly due to the raft of changes in the sector which have occurred in swift succession. The formal professionalisation of FE teachers in 2007 was a relatively new concept in the history of FE teacher professionalisation and an increased interest has since emerged on the professional identities of FE teachers as a result. It would appear that amongst all the changes, the functional role of the teacher in FE has been largely overlooked by the government over the past ten years; overshadowed by increasing performative measures from Ofsted (Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills) and public battles regarding regulatory professionalism of the sector (Wallace, 2013; Duckworth and Tummons, 2010). It is for this reason that the 'voices' of teachers are crucial to these studies, in order to provide a balance of views alongside the literature and policy. The literature indicates that FE teachers feel they are outside of the discourse on their own identities and practices and their presence is not acknowledged, therefore it is central to this study that FE teacher voices are included (AoC, 2016; The Policy Consortium, 2014; Norton, 2012).

It is noteworthy that the bulk of the literature regarding teacher professionalism focuses primarily on the compulsory sector, secondly on Higher Education (HE), and FE appears to be the least prominent of the three. Discussions of FE teacher professionalism have steadily gained traction over the past ten years but this is mainly due to government intervention on professionalising and then deregulating the sector. At the start of this research few studies had investigated the impact of how an evolving FE sector has affected teacher professional identities. Little had been written about the competitive and combative personal and professional identities that exist within FE teachers and it is noteworthy that since deregulation in 2012 there has been far greater interest in professionalism for FE teachers. Previous research has tended to overlook how the many roles played by an FE teacher may impact on how they

see themselves professionally, and fail to recognise the importance of this when aligned to normative accounts of a profession and professionalism. A particularly contentious issue for FE teachers that has steadily built over the past 20 years is the declining levels of status and respect for teaching staff working in the sector. The literature does clearly identify that teachers are deserved of status and respect, but in practice this appears to be at a much more reduced level for FE teachers compared to other education sectors (Shah, 2014: Harland, 1987). FE appears to have its own set of challenges associated with teacher professional identity and this is not well established in the literature at an analytical level. Existing research has focused on how the sector has evolved through marketisation but has limited exploration into how this has changed professional constructs for FE teachers and the way they form and build their professional identities.

1.4.0 Methodological Approach

The research design employed a qualitative approach which utilised the 'voices' of FE teachers, facilitated collective narratives, and also provided opportunities to identify nuances in the data. The sector itself has rapidly become quantified, linked to teacher performativity, but the issue with this type of data is that it fails to illustrate the multi-layered stories which underpin the narratives from the inside (Appleyard and Appleyard, 2016); it was for this reason that I did not want a quantitative approach to become part of my research. By using a qualitative approach, featuring FE teachers, a rich source of data is provided and offers insights into how and what FE teachers think about their professional identities; beyond the everyday narratives (Flick, 2014; Gray, 2009; Cresswell, 1994). The 30 FE teachers who participated in the research were keen to talk and share their experiences, and this was facilitated through unstructured focus groups and individual unstructured interviews. Care was taken to ensure that a cross section of FE teachers were included for adequate representation of all teacher 'types' due to the diverse nature of the sector. The FE teachers were a mixture of newly qualified (NQT) and qualified (QT), and had varying levels of knowledge, qualifications and experience. Their commonality was that they all either worked in, or were studying for teacher training qualifications at the case study site (Fairview).

The participants who were studying for their teacher training qualifications on a part time basis in the evenings were working in a variety of educational organisations as their full time employment; this facilitated broader themes to be drawn out from other organisations.

In using the 'voices' of individuals as a source of data, ontologically, this supports the notion that reality is constructed through individuals making meaning from people's perceptions and positions in society (Cresswell, 1994) (Table 4). Epistemologically, I believe that social reality and meaning are subjective and value led with truth contextualised and situated; this links robustly with focusing on FE teacher 'voices' as a vehicle for exploring notions of FE teacher professionalism. As an in insider amongst the research, both as a former employee and FE teacher, I had implicit knowledge of the organisation and the role, this supported me in being reflexive and critical throughout the research process. The approach taken was interpretive; looking at the 'how' and 'why' of FE teacher professionalism through the 'subjective world of human experience' (Cohen et al., 2011: 17). This approach was the most beneficial for gaining an understanding of the phenomena and exploring from within what shapes and influences FE teacher professionalism through shared experiences. Meaning was elicited from the participants to support the process of 'problematisation' (Foucault, 1994) and additionally, an interpretive approach allowed for understanding to be expanded and illuminate social processes (Cresswell, 1994).

I recognise that as an insider my involvement may not be value free and so steps were taken to reduce this through engagement with a critical friend who oversaw the research plans. As an insider, I felt it important that my voice and experience became part of the narrative to drive forward a strong objectivity. By sharing my story of being an FE teacher during a particularly troublesome period within the sector, I have asserted my position as an insider and utilised my similar experiences. What also must be acknowledged, is that being an insider with strong values and morals led me to undertake this extensive piece of research; with less knowledge, I would have been less likely to have instigated the research due to being disassociated with the issues arising from

being an FE teacher (McWilliam and Tann, 2010). Ethically, in addition to engaging with a critical friend, and doctoral supervisor, ethical guidelines were followed and utilised throughout the research, and ethical approval was sought from the place of research prior to ethical approval being applied for with the university of study (BERA, 2011).

The case study site represented a typical college in the FE sector, offering academic and vocational courses to students from age 16+. From the experience of working across the sector in several FE organisations, the case study site appeared to have no influential hold over FE teacher professionalism. Its ways of working and its staff demographic indicated a commonality with other FE providers in the sector. One of the key principles of this research was to go beyond literature and policy and involve the voices of FE teachers; it is about the people rather than the organisation. This was particularly important to me as a former FE teacher due to being part of the 'forgotten and ignored' narrative during rapid policy and regulation change between 2007 and 2012. At the time of data collection, the case study site was my place of work and offered convenience of access in addition to myself having insider knowledge about the organisation; this assisted me greatly in carrying out the research and was fully supported by the organisation.

1.5.0 Concluding Remarks

This chapter has reviewed the aims, objectives and research questions and also provided a rationale and context for the exploration of FE teacher professionalism. The concept of FE teacher professionalism has been identified as problematic for a number of reasons and aligns well with utilising a qualitative approach to the research due to the many voices that are present but have not been thoroughly acknowledged in previous research on FE teacher professionalism (FE teachers in particular). FE teacher voices are under represented in the literature and as a result of this it is not widely known how FE teachers form their professional identities and orientate themselves within the sector, and amongst their peers. Overall, this research will answer questions related to FE teacher professionalism through the narratives of FE teachers in an attempt to gain a greater understanding of FE teacher

professionalism. In undertaking the research, the attributes of FE teaching as a profession will be explored and how teachers orientate themselves professionally within the sector will be reviewed.

Chapter 2 is dedicated to reviewing the literature on the FE sector, the concept of professionalism, and how FE teacher professional is situated between the two. Utilising Foucault's (1994) themes on power and control in particular, sections of the review are organised by how identity is formed as a consequence of power. Models of professionalism from three widely cited authors, Freidson (2004), Hoyle (1972) and Greenwood (1957), will be reviewed and their relevance and association with FE teacher professionalism will be discussed. This will be synthesised with the literature on the relationships between professions, professionals, professionalism, and occupations. Finally, the identification of FE teaching being classed as a profession will be discussed.

Chapter 3 aims to rationalise the choice of methodology and methods linked to the use of Foucault's themes and the work of prominent authors on professionalism. It will explain the rationale for choice of case study and participants, and also review my researcher positionality as an insider. Ethical considerations will also be discussed, with decisions made to reduce any ethical issues and limit researcher bias. As the study is wholly qualitative, the benefits of using this approach will be outlined and processes explained which will demonstrate how I maintained reliability and validity of my findings. The data analysis methods will be explained and a rationale provided for using manual thematic inVivo coding.

Chapter 4 presents the research findings thematically in light of the relevant literature and the theoretical framework. The work of Freidson (2004), Hoyle (1972) and Greenwood (1957), alongside the data, were drawn together, with Foucault's (1994) concept of *'problematisation'* utilised to facilitate and build strong discussions. The narratives in this chapter are grouped according to themes and serve to emphasise their links to issues with power and identity formation. The teacher 'voices' are presented throughout to allow for greater reader engagement with the participants' thoughts and feelings.

Chapter 5 discusses the findings and provides an in-depth analysis of the data and is organised using problematisation as an overarching theme. The sections within this chapter link to the problematisation of FE teacher professionalism and are discussed in detail in order to determine if FE teaching can be defined as profession, and correspondingly FE teachers classed as members of a profession.

Chapter 6 clarifies the key findings from my research and presents the contribution to knowledge which has emerged from the study. It discusses the generalisability and transferability of the study, and also provides recommendations for the future alongside identifying areas for further study and indicating where any limitations lie.

Characteristics and traits of a profession		
Greenwood (1957)	**Freidson (2004)**	**Hoyle (1972)**
Education and Knowledge		
Has extensive education	Has specialist formal knowledge and skills	Has a lengthy period of academic and practical training
Controls its own training and education	Controls its own training and education – specialised and lengthy	Generates in-service growth
Has systematic theory	Has high skills and competency in their work	Is founded upon a systematic body of knowledge’
Has a distinctive culture	Work cannot be standardised/ rationalised/commodified	Is divergent from that of others and does not have shared values with outsiders
Controls its own accreditation – grants and withholds	Controls its own accreditation – grants and withholds	
Is absorbed in their specialist area		
Power and Control		
Has authority	Control of own work – freedom of judgement/discretion	Has a high degree of autonomy’
Has power	Has self-control	Self-governed and control over its functions
Has privilege	Has prestige and status	Has prestige, status and privilege
Has control over entry	Has gatekeepers	
Is immune from community judgement	Is protected	
Can apply community sanction		
Cannot withhold their services		
	Exists as part of a hierarchy	

Characteristics and traits of a profession cont.		
Greenwood (1957)	**Freidson (2004)**	**Hoyle (1972)**
Behaviours		
Has ethical codes	Has professional codes and ethics	Has a code of ethics’
Provides a high calibre service	Their work is of high value	Performs an essential social service’
Operates for social good – pay is secondary	Works for the satisfaction - virtuous	Put the interests of the collective before their own interests
Has an ideal type - coherent	Has a professional community – similar types – occupational solidarity	
Weeds deviance out quickly		
Employs rationality		
Has systems of behaviour - norms		
Is devoted to the profession		
Cannot separate work and home life easily		
Answers a ‘calling’		
	Has a distinct identity	
		Performs highly differentiated tasks

Table 2. – Commonalities and disparities of professional traits and characteristics – based on the work of Freidson (2004), Hoyle (1972) and Greenwood (1957).

Chapter 2. Literature Review

2.0.0 Introduction

Teachers today bear very little resemblance to the historical, cap and gowned authoritative professionals which existed in the past; yet there still appears to be underlying beliefs and traditions about what characterises a teacher and how this is enacted by the individuals in the sector. Teachers have been involved in debates about their validity as professionals, and continue to do so, due to the difficulty in applying the concept of professionalism to a role that includes many characteristics of an occupation (Rogers et al., 2014; Coxon et al., 1986; Hoyle, 1972) (Table 3). There is ongoing debate as to whether teachers, particularly in FE, can be compared to well established professions such as medicine and law, and amongst these discussions there lies a sense of confused professional identity for teachers which may be impacting on their role, work and position in society.

For the purpose of this literature review, sources have been selected from a variety of education sectors due to the relatively new literature emerging on professionalism in FE at the time of the study being undertaken. The literature from other education sectors offers transferable insights into FE due to the similarities and complexities of the roles under the common professional title of 'teacher'. This serves to support the proliferation of literature regarding FE teacher professionalism as major changes regarding their professional status were proposed and began implementation shortly before the research was undertaken. Also notable, are that the majority of research methodologies in the literature have been qualitative, thus ensuring that the voices of individuals and the collective can be heard; providing a rich picture of the sector which encompasses many similarities where teachers and their professional identities are concerned. The main scope of literature ranges from 1957 to 2019 mainly focusing on government policy (England), reports and journal articles; the latter mainly as a response to policy. The policy context (Appendix I) was also reviewed from 1964 to 2019 paying particular attention to the ruling political parties. Interestingly, the most policy changes regarding education and skills were exacted since the New Labour government in 1997, and it

appears that education was subject to greater scrutiny and target for reforms than previously (Appendix I). This may be related to the approach of the New Labour government's, and successive governments, introduction and adoption of the New Public Management Model which focused upon the 'centrality of citizens' as service users and customers within the public sector (Juneja, 2019: np).

Within this literature review there are also multiple references to the works of Freidson, (1970-2004) Hoyle (1972-2001) and Greenwood (1957), all authoritative voices on professionalism with their work utilised to form a coherent framework for identifying professionalism. Hoyle (1972-2001) in particular provides exceptional insights from his early work on teacher identities in compulsory education and still provides continuous, relevant links to the discourse on teacher professionalism today. Hoyle (1972) foresaw issues which have become recurrent in the discourse of teacher professionalism, and still exist today: reduced autonomy, technological advances that would impact on teaching, differing methods of instruction being used, the teacher as a facilitator, personalised learning, expansion of the teacher role pastorally, media intrusion, state control and value conflict. This evolving work of Hoyle (1972-2001), and his advanced understanding of the implications of changes within the sector, provides a foundation in this review for discussion and debate on contemporary teacher professionalism; his work is of great significance in shaping this research and the research questions in order to explore FE teacher professionalism in greater detail. An additional key author's work, Macdonald (1995), has also been drawn upon specifically due to his critique of the definitions of the professions and professionals. Macdonald's (1995) focus on the semantics of the terms, profession and professional, providing insights into the complexities of using terms which have multiple meanings when applied to particular roles.

On a final note, to demonstrate the impact of changes within teacher professionalism, there is evidence of spikes in literature associated with the words 'teacher professionalism' and 'teacher identity' at the times when major interventions took place; this suggests there were substantial responses to the

changes which were introduced regarding teacher professionalism across all sectors, including FE (Appendix XIII).

The literature review has been structured in the following order: first, looking at the historical context of FE to provide an insight into how the sector has developed over the preceding 40 years up until 2017. I discuss the policy contexts, areas of significant change and their effects, and what impact this has had on the sector and those that work within it over the years. Secondly, constructs of a profession, professional, and professionalism have been discussed and critiqued alongside the context and concepts of professionalism in the sector and FE teaching. Thirdly, the distribution of power and control within professions and the sector, and how they are enacted by FE teachers, has been reviewed to address the recurrent arguments that are common in FE teacher professionalism linked to loss of autonomy. Finally, the professional identities of FE teachers has been explored and rationalised against the common indicators of a professional. I base this on the work of Hoyle (1972-2001), Freidson (1970-2004) and Greenwood (1957) in order to underpin where FE teachers locate themselves within professional frameworks and provide a summative rationale for the key areas of the research to be reviewed (Appendix I).

2.1.0 Historical Context

This section reviews and discusses how the FE landscape formed and has evolved during the last forty years, focusing on well documented and significant areas of change within the sector. The extensive research by Gillard (2018) and McCullough (1995) on the history of education policy has been utilised throughout this section and supports discussion on the key areas of policy change referred to in the policy timeline (Appendix I). The provision of FE as a tool for social justice will be discussed alongside the implications of marketisation of the sector and the potential impact this may have on the teachers who work within it. The rationale for reviewing the historical policy context that FE teachers work in, is to identify where it may impact on FE teachers' professional identities and how they perceive themselves as professionals.

Over the years, FE has been synonymous with many names: technical education, vocational education and training, learning and skills sector, lifelong learning and adult education (Wallace, 2013). In its present state it is known as FE and generally defined as education for those who have left school and are below university level education (Cambridge Dictionary, 2017a; Collins, 2017). This definition is not without problems though as the sector has diversified greatly in the last ten years; it now offers far more than the definition suggests such as alternative provision and specialist vocational education for 14-16 year old school children, high level technical, job-focused education, HE and Higher National Diplomas (HNDs). Prior to the 1970s, the FE sector was specialist, clearly defined and had a strong association with being an alternative to academic studies (Wallace, 2013; Lucas, 2004a; Baker, 1989). Wallace (2013: 11) rightly states that education '[was] something very different – and much narrower – than our present day understanding' and was crudely split between skills and knowledge: FE provided skills and HE provided the knowledge.

Currently, FE, in all of its forms, is the main provider of skills for employment with approximately 2.7 million students per year passing through the system as of 2016 (AoC, 2016). The sheer volume of students who attend FE make this one of its most defining features: a majority of individuals at some point in their lives are likely to have come into contact with FE in one of its many forms. FE teachers are a substantial occupational group, approximately 65,000 individuals, and due to the size of the workforce it should be impossible to ignore their voices, yet there is a recurring theme in the literature that teachers feel they have little or no voice despite invitations to become part of the ongoing discourse. This is particularly prevalent when FE teacher professionalism is broached as rapid, market-led changes in the sector have resulted in a recurring series of crises and settlements for FE teachers in forming and recognising their own professional identities (Robson, 2006: Grace, 1990).

2.1.1 Key Historical Developments

1951 – 1964 Conservative Government
FE teacher visibility increased

The foundations of building an education system to supply a labour market were built upon Churchill's Conservative government between 1951-1964. Amidst a post war boom there was a significant rise in those attending education with college provision increasing at a rapid rate; as a result teaching staff across all sectors were in high demand. At this point in time, FE was moving towards the vision of being purposeful and progressive in order to contribute to a 'strong social fabric' (Kogan, 1978: 21) and FE teachers' work became important and more visible in meeting the post war government's aims.

1964 – 1970 Labour Government
Stakeholders begin to influence teachers' work

During a period of liberalisation, more money was spent on education than defence and the start of widening participation into post compulsory education had begun. Interestingly, parents and students started to become influential at this point in shaping their children's/own education and their roles as stakeholders started to form. The training of teachers in compulsory education also came under scrutiny and was heavily criticised for being academically unsound which instigated a major overhaul of teacher training qualifications to encompass the 'study of education' (Simon, 1991: 376) and build theoretical knowledge, much like the consecutive overhauls of FE teacher training requirements from the late 1990s onwards.

1970 – 1974 Conservative Government
New Public Management strengthens stakeholder influence over teachers' work

Post economic boom from the previous government, the Conservatives came into power amidst a recession which directly impacted on the previous financial boosts that were provided by the Labour government. With Margaret Thatcher as Education Secretary, many of her proposals were met with strong opposition from the newly formed stakeholders, who were parents and

teachers, illustrating the strength that was building to influence policy from individuals whose voices were normally absent in the influential discourse; the seeds of New Public Management were gradually forming through involvement of service users and customers. Teacher education was again reviewed and included references to professional education and training for FE teachers (James, 1972). Due to economic difficulties in the sector, stemming from a global recession, at the end of 1973 a change of government occurred which moved towards more neoliberal ideologies and began to operationalise their work through decentralised control and marketised principles in order to provide value for money and better quality (Juneja, 2019; Kapuchu, 2006).

1974 – 1979 Labour Government
Teachers become more accountable and widely scrutinised

This time period was a turbulent phase for education as the country plunged into a major recession and there were severe cuts to government spending. A cycle of financial cuts and strikes were in motion and education and teachers were targets for reorganisation. School teachers were met with derision from the government and targeted to become more accountable through broad policy change attributed to neoliberalism; 'controlled de-control' (Du Gay, 1996 in Ball 2003: 217). It is evident that accountability and performativity in all sectors stems from this particular era where teaching staff were objects of close scrutiny as part of a process (O'Leary, 2015); Ball (2003: 217) defines this as 're-regulation'. The 'combative' work of the unions was influential in terms of representing teachers from this point onwards (Kogan, 1978: 81). Teachers' voices were becoming louder, supported by the unions, in a period where there were severe cuts to education but higher demands were being made of those that worked within it through performative measures.

The changing nature of students was also starting to become apparent during this period, recognition for them becoming more demanding and detached from the educational system started to be a focus for determining how this could be addressed through various means linked directly to teaching practice. At this point teachers in general became the focus for the educational ills of the decade through the media lens and struggled with their professional reputations (Chitty, 2009). It was also around this time that 'consumer-

orientated education' was first mooted, a concept which is now fully integrated into the FE system; easily identifiable as commodified education and a marketised sector which has implications for how teachers carry out their work (Benn and Chitty, 1996: 11).

1979 – 1990 Conservative Government
Performativity becomes significant to the work of teachers

The extensive upward spike in literature during this particular period illustrates there were many responses to the numerous, and consistent, changes made by the government at the time (Appendix XIII). Free market principles were promoted by the government in response to reducing the country's debt and spiralling unemployment rates with the introduction of a marketised education quickly following (Sexton, 1977). Value for money, in all sectors and the services they provided, were to become a key priority for the government which is still evident today where all education sectors expect more for less in a bid to be profitable (O'Leary, 2015: Duckworth and Tummons, 2010). FE was now required to become self-managing and commercially viable, unfortunately creating opportunities for profiteering as a consequence (Duckworth and Smith, 2018; Shah, 2014; Robson, 2006; Whitty, 2000). The dynamics and operations of FE changed dramatically under this new regime of financial self-governance and it has been argued this has shifted the traditional principles of provision of FE, social justice and empowerment, and displaced them amongst business concepts (marketisation) (Ball, 2013). The term 'centralisation' of education also emerged as a method of overseeing what was happening in FE (Ranson, 1984: 238); the power of the government in deciding what went on in FE rose sharply over the next few years as a result of this and has strong links to performance measures still exist in the sector today (O'Leary, 2015, 2013).

The directed focus upon student achievements was more evident than in any preceding government with 'twin aims' to make education 'more responsive to the needs of industry and more susceptible to market forces' (Gillard, 2018: np). In response to this, all educational sectors were challenged on their current process and practices; this resulted in opposition from staff within the

sector and signalled the start of enforcing performativity as part of the government's role in improving staff and student performance. Performativity, previously more closely associated with business and production, started to become a key feature of measuring success within education from the early 90s (O'Leary, 2013). This mainly quantitative approach to measuring success and quality, through the achievement of set data targets and/or performance indicators, is utilised by government agencies and regulatory bodies and aligned to the provision of funding within the education sectors. Wallace (2019: np) indicates that the term 'performativity' has negative connotations in itself due to being associated with 'limitations of [a] quantitative, target-based approach to the evaluation of an educational process'.

Alongside major reforms across all education sectors, teachers were also involved in disputes regarding pay and conditions. Pay was eroding and there were suggestions from the government that if teachers wanted to increase their pay then this should be linked to performance (Simon, 1991). This increased focus on the work of teachers, linked to performance measures, angered teachers greatly during the midst of budget cuts, teacher shortages and a looming pay crisis and caused a significant rift between teachers and the government which has for the main continued to this day. Interestingly, Jones (2003: 129) observes that this was the climax of teachers being broken by the government as they were forced towards a compliance model through performativity; their 'energies were exhausted, their divisions considerable, their public support dwindling'.

After the intense scrutiny of compulsory education, towards the end of Thatcher's tenancy, Education Secretary, Kenneth Baker, turned his focus towards FE. In a bid to end the 'Cinderella' image of the sector he proposed far reaching reforms which set a precedent for the way FE was governed in the future and how it operated. Baker's (1989) seminal speech suggested that school leavers remain in education until the age of 19, enacted in full since 2015, and that targets were set for providers linked to attainment and achievement. Baker (1989: 18) suggested that FE was perceived as having a 'dowdy image' and 'undeniably low profile' and needed to work to improve its

image and attract more people; recognising that the sector and those who work in it were suffering from a status inequality compared to other education sectors.

1990 – 1997 Conservative Government
Intense professional reforms occur for teachers across all sectors

The intensity and the enormity of the work carried out in education during this period is evidenced in the 1993 Education Act; this Act was the most significant piece of legislation to be produced and enacted within education since records began and illustrated the government's aim in reforming education (Gillard, 2018). Despite the scale of the 1993 Education Act, less than a year later another iteration of the Education Act appeared in 1994 focusing on teacher training for school teachers and replacing the overseeing body for teacher training, The Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education (CATE) with The Teacher Training Agency (TTA). CATE were criticised for providing a teacher training model which focused on training rather than education and narrow 'competencies' which were perceived as 'more suitable for plumbers than teachers whose classroom behaviour had to be sensitive and flexible' resulting in the TTA taking over (Lawton, 2005: 112). Despite this perspective on teacher training stemming from compulsory education, a point of interest from this quote was that there was a sense of division apparent in the way teachers from different sectors are trained, supported by the lack of qualifications required by FE teachers compared to school teachers at the time (Lucas, 2002). It suggests that school teachers require a distinct form of teacher training compared to FE teachers, and indicates a sense of hierarchy between the sectors in requirements for professional practice; FE being of a lower status due to competency based requirements from staff and students.

Whilst the sector was still trying to accept and apply new ways of working as a result of frequent regulation, The Dearing Review (1996) further exacerbated the growing discontent from staff who were under constant pressure to change (Lucas, 2002). The government doggedly pursued FE as one of the main reasons for economic failure relating to the jobs market and felt the need to consistently intervene without giving the sector time to adjust to previous rapid

and successive changes. Additionally, there was an intense focus on saving money across the sector which acted as a prequel for the now commonly used term in FE of getting 'more for less'.

1997 – 2010 Labour Government
Performative measures become more deeply embedded into teachers' work

As New Labour sought to fix the damage done from the previous government regarding the severe expenditure cuts to all services, education was again placed as a priority for investment. Labour promised to make right what they perceived as untold damage to teacher relations across all sectors and give significant investment to specific educational areas; their new education policy was guided by five overarching principles, 'access for all, quality and equity, continuity, accountability, and partnership' under the now infamous priority strapline 'education, education, education' (Gillard, 2008: np).

It soon became clear that many of the Conservative policies were being upheld by New Labour in regard to the marketisation of education and performativity in the sectors (DfE, 2001). The performative measures that the Labour government were set to enforce were underpinned in one of the six principles of their education policy: 'there will be zero tolerance of underperformance' (DfEE, 1997: 5). This sent out a strong message across all sectors that accountability would be enforced and there would be penalties for underperformers within the organisation and for the providers as a whole. For teachers a strong blame culture was developing against them based upon the lack of student achievement against ambitious previous government targets (Mortimore, 2009). The respite teachers hoped for did not materialise as promised in the Labour election manifesto with Labour setting even more ambitious targets than had gone before, including introducing a national curriculum, alongside this teachers' professional judgement was also being reduced in terms of student ability to achieve and managing behavioural issues (Mortimore, 2009; Jones, 2003). Although these immense changes were situated within the schools sector, they would have consequences for the FE sector in fairly rapid succession through performative measures increasingly implemented across the majority of FE teachers' work. Over the next eight

years there were countless re-enactments of the same key priorities from the government regarding FE, involving literacy and numeracy targets, skills for employment and widening participation (Kennedy, 1992). All of these had targets associated with them that meant that the sector had to be reactive and performative in order to satisfy funding and inspection requirements.

In terms of professional status, FE teachers were identified by Moser (1999: 8) alongside the Training Standards Council, rather negatively in his report on improving literacy and numeracy, as 'too many teachers teach[ing] part time, and some are inadequately prepared'; referring to basic education staff 'frequently hav[ing] no relevant qualification in the area they teach. Some lack general teaching qualifications and others lack specialist qualifications', suggesting that they require 'proper monitoring' and mandatory training as a result (Moser, 1999: 29, 14). His comparison of FE teachers to school teachers is rather uncomplimentary despite his acknowledgement that FE teachers have a difficult job and work within a transient sector:

> In essence the best-trained teachers in our education system are teaching enthusiastic young children at Key Stage 1. Those with least opportunities for professional development, and with most job insecurity, are teaching adults who have often failed at school and need intensive help (Moser, 1999: 29).

The 'Cinderella' service he frequently refers to in his report suggests that FE was marginalised amongst the other sectors and lacked value and status in comparison; interestingly, this is the first documented reference to FE being publicly referred to in this way by government advisors and now forms part of regular discourse regarding the status of FE (Norton, 2012; Duckworth and Tummons, 2010; Randle and Brady, 1997). Due to the ambitious achievement targets being set by the government and linked to funding, this effectively pitched providers against each other and also clearly identified to inspection bodies and funders, providers who were underachieving based upon their data (Duckworth and Tummons, 2010).

Policy and regulation during Labour's term of office document the rise, and some would argue the fall, of FE teacher professionalism in particular through the state's continuous aims to professionalise and gain parity for the sector.

During this period, FE teachers were significantly targeted in this area for the first time with the introduction of a wide range of professional standards and requirements which added another layer of performativity to an already burgeoning role (DfE, 2007b; LLUK, 2006; FENTO, 1999). The marketised sector attracted managerialist behaviours, where FE teachers' work was intensely scrutinised to ensure achievements were guaranteed to maximise funding, and FE teachers were routed into a quality assured process which provided them with a license to teach on meeting the required criteria to ensure that their practice was of high quality (DfE, 2007b).

As part of the Continuing Professional Development and Registration Regulations which were in force at the time (DfE, 2007b) teaching staff were required to evidence that they were subject specialists and also teaching specialists (dual professionals); those who could not prove this through proof of qualifications were required to undertake study to achieve formal qualifications within a set timeframe placing significant pressure on staff. Additionally, teaching staff had to hold at least at Level 2 or Grade C in English and maths; and undertake set hours of CPD, mirroring the requirements for teachers in the compulsory sector. Another element of the regulations was to undertake professional formation, again within a set time period in order to achieve QTLS status which provided a licence to practice; without the licence then the position of the teacher was seriously in jeopardy within the workplace due the lack of adherence to regulations. This top down approach was both welcomed and also shunned at the same time. Teaching staff were overwhelmed by the raft of continuous changes regarding their educational offer, barely able to respond in a structured manner, when yet another change was made; professionalising FE teaching was another task to add to the growing pile of requirements for working in the sector (Wallace, 2013).

It would appear that state power was being asserted to re-conceptualise levels of professionalism in FE teachers and challenges were being made to the freedom FE teachers possessed by placing them within performative, bureaucratic and administrative frameworks that did not explicitly evidence capability but ensured that statutory requirements were fulfilled; these were

linked to government visions of a higher quality of provision (Tummons, 2009). This allowed the state to take control of individuals and enforce power over teachers through the requirement to undertake and achieve professional formation to be able to work in the sector; behaviour which was previously not clearly evident in FE and more closely aligned to teaching staff in schools who were not permitted to teach unless they were qualified and registered. The regulation of the sector through various legislative mechanisms including Ofsted, overarching bodies Lifelong Learning UK (LLUK), and specific professional bodies (Institute for Learning (IfL), attempted to standardise FE teacher identity through the normalisation of FE teacher behaviours. This was pursued through observation, training, registration, and achieving required qualifications mainly through the newly formed professional body, IfL.

The IfL was formed in 2002 as the professional body for FE teachers, initially with voluntary membership. As part of the Department for Education's FE Teachers Continuing Professional Development and Registration Regulations, FE staff from 2007 onwards had to belong to the IfL and undergo professional formation to achieve Qualified Teaching and Learning Status (QTLS) (or Associate Teacher Learning and Skills Status - ATLS) in order to work in the sector if the provision was government funded (DfE, 2007a/b). The professional body itself was government funded which therefore enabled subsidisation for membership. Predictably, there were large contingencies of opposition from staff who worked in a previously lightly regulated sector, as well as associated confusion over having to prove themselves professionally (Thompson, 2014; Plowright and Barr, 2012); staff also expressed fear at the prospect of being disciplined or losing their jobs if they did not join IfL or commit themselves to professional formation (UCU, 2009). The monitoring, evidence gathering and financial implications provoked strong responses from teaching staff who felt this was an intrusion on their diverse practices and an insult to their professionalism, and furthermore another act of oppression from the government to add to the ever growing performativity expectations for FE teachers (Plowright and Barr, 2012; Orr, 2009; Coffield et al., 2005; Lucas, 2004b).

Interestingly, in what was to be Labour's final term, despite the focus still being on education for employment there was a change in terminology in relation to this. The government were now rephrasing their educational agendas to promote education for improving life chances; this could be interpreted as a softer approach compared to the previous aggressiveness from the government regarding education solely for employment and global competitiveness.

2010 - 2015 Coalition Government (Conservative and Liberal Democrat)
A renewed focus on teacher professionalism and raising standards

The unusual occurrence of a coalition government being formed in 2010 meant that for education, formerly different views and manifestos on how it could be improved had to be revised in order to satisfy both governing parties. Both parties were in agreement in one respect, to drastically cut expenditure; this drew education, yet again, into further reductions in funding and an increased focus on providing even more for less (Gillard, 2018). The emphasis on work skills also returned, along with the familiar rhetoric of students being work ready and contributing to competitiveness in the global economy (DfE, 2010a/b; CBI, 2010).

As compulsory education was being extensively reviewed, there was also a major review of post compulsory education carried out by Alison Wolf. It was prompted by the directive that all school leavers had to be in education or employment until aged 18 which greatly increased numbers within the sector, therefore raising awareness by the government that standards required reviewing. Wolf (2011) criticised the current provision heavily and her recommendations had a major effect on the offer as a whole and the way staff worked within the sector. English and maths were prioritised in programmes of study, with main funding linked to success in these areas before achievement in main qualifications, putting considerable pressure on teaching staff to get students through by any means necessary to secure the funding. Interlinked with Wolf's report (2011) was the government's review and recommendations for skills funding within the FE sector (DBIS, 2010). Economic competitiveness was again perceived as key to the country's

financial recovery; FE and teaching staff were now targeted, and prioritised, as a major contributor for safeguarding economic global positioning (TUC, 2009).

A renewed focus on teaching as a profession emerged rapidly as the newly formed coalition government demanded high standards within practice and the provision of greater autonomy for teaching staff. Mixed messages were being delivered by the government on how teachers learned and developed their professional practice with suggestions that the role was based merely on observing others and did not require any formal training whatsoever; a move which was deemed extremely damaging to the profession by teachers and those who provided teacher training education (Gillard, 2018; Husbands, 2012; Boffey, 2011). It would now appear that the extensive academic study carried out by trainee teachers in conjunction with on the job training was being trivialised and aligned more closely to occupational requirements rather than professional requirements (Table 3).

It is of interest that during this period the government was in the process of trying to vocationalise teacher training in the compulsory sector, promoting this as a rapid improvement to the traditional academic route into teaching. However, this was in opposition to their proposals for schools to move away from vocational qualifications as they were deemed to lack value; this evidences clear inconsistency from the government on the value of academic qualifications compared to vocational qualifications. Further support for this at the time was evidenced from Michael Gove (Education Secretary) (Gov.uk, 2013), who declared that certain provisions would be allowed to employ teaching staff with no formal teaching qualifications, a suggestion opposed by parents yet a common feature of academies and FE providers today (Mulholland, 2012). The main criticisms of this practice were that the status of the profession would be devalued, and that the rationale for this was borne out of the desire to save money by both the government and education providers (Blower in Mulholland, 2012). It was argued that unqualified teachers (UQTs) posed a risk to quality and it would not be sanctioned for those working in medicine or law to practice if unqualified, therefore why would it be appropriate

for teachers (Sallis, 2013; Husbands, 2012; Keates in Mulholland, 2012). Many viewed this as a trivialisation of the skills and knowledge required to work in the education sector and believed it posed a huge risk to standards, quality and safety.

Within FE, there was also parity with the compulsory sector on the revocation of teacher training qualifications, from legislation enacted in 2007, in order to teach within the sector (DfE, 2013a; DBIS, 2012); this occurred as a consequence of the Lingfield Report which reviewed teacher training qualifications in the post compulsory sector and requirement for professional membership. Previous robust FE teacher training qualification frameworks and requirements were now being abolished, it would appear, in order to save money and ensure consistency by allowing employers greater flexibility in who they employed and how they spent their CPD budgets:

> It is not enough to expect lecturers alone to take responsibility for professionalism or, as was the case under the 2007 Regulations, to attempt to coerce them into doing so. Employers must share responsibility for encouraging professionalism by offering their moral and tangible support to their staff. Both employers and employees will flourish in an atmosphere of flexibility and autonomy. It is the task of the former to ensure that this new 'freedom to excel' is enjoyed by the latter and we hope that the opportunity to explore and decide how lecturers may do so will be taken up enthusiastically. It is on lecturers that a better service to learners will essentially depend. (DBIS, 2012: 23).

Since the implementation of the recommendations from the Lingfield Report it has been argued that this was the catalyst for the de-professionalisation of FE teachers; also through revocation of qualifications this would place FE teachers in a less favourable professional position with teaching peers from other educational sectors and in effect lose its newly gained distinctiveness (The Policy Consortium, 2014; IfL, 2013; Lucas, 2013).

It was noted that the greatly reduced requirements needed for entry into the FE sector were not comparable to requirements for working in compulsory education and higher education, therefore status of FE teachers may have been negatively affected as a consequence (Husbands, 2012; IfL, 2012; Lee, 2012). The professional body for FE teachers at the time, the IfL, conceded

that this was a confusing time for FE teachers regarding their professional status and that they would fight to ensure that professional recognition would remain in sight post deregulation through their continued leadership as a self-funded professional body. Consequently, post deregulation, the IfL ceased as a professional body in 2014 and government funding was removed. They were heavily criticised in the Lingfield Report for not leading the sector effectively and providing less than expected as a professional body which resulted in their loss of government funding and seizure of mandatory membership for teaching staff. Their membership reduced dramatically as a result of professional membership moving to being voluntary and self-funding, and additionally their credibility within the sector was questioned by FE staff and their representatives for the lack of impact they had made as a professional body over the five years they had regulated (Groves, 2015; DBIS, 2012; UCU, 2009). Their successors, the newly formed Education and Training Foundation (ETF), a professional body with voluntary membership appear to be another reiteration of the IfL although they are employer led rather than member led. This in itself has drawn criticism as it appears to be undertaking a power function aimed *at* their members rather than *for* their members. As a professional body their work is determined by other stakeholders rather than FE teachers and their main area of work is to offer support in the implementation of government policy and regulation (Groves, 2015; Thompson, 2014). Another contentious issue is that in order to continue to hold QTLS status, holders must be members of the ETF which is not funded by employers; this lack of financial engagement with the ETF by employers has been detrimental to the ETF's membership numbers as FE teachers are not in receipt of high rates of pay. Currently there is no requirement to requalify for QTLS after a period set by the ETF or employers and therefore membership does not act as an accurate indicator of members' being conversant in the latest developments; developments within the ETF professional standards framework (Appendix II) and the sector as a whole. As with the IfL, the ETF appears to be struggling with credibility for the very same reasons as the IfL when it moved to voluntary membership as a result of deregulation.

2015 - Present Conservative Government

Professional freedom impacts on professional consistency and standardisation

Post coalition government, the Conservative government appeared to acknowledge that the education system had become bureaucratically and administratively over engineered which had resulted in a negative impact on the sector as a whole (Adams, 2015); their claimed objective was to offer support rather than oppression in order to develop and maintain excellence (DfE, 2016a/b). Critiques of the government's action, in reducing the entry requirements for entering teaching in the compulsory and post compulsory sectors, observed that some teachers were underqualified for the subject levels that they taught thus impacting upon student achievement and the quality of provision (CPAC, 2016; IfL, 2013). Despite this, the government still upheld allowing organisations complete freedom to determine what qualifications they required for their own teaching staff. Consequently, this varied considerably between organisations and has created a confusing and unstandardised approach to professional requirements for teaching within the FE sector.

A recent predecessor and further inception of the technical education promotion is the introduction of T Levels in the post compulsory sector from 2020 (DfE, 2018). The T Levels are described as being more challenging than vocational courses due to the competencies which have to be evidenced as opposed to knowledge and understanding (ETF, 2019e). In a move towards teaching competency based education the government believe that existing teaching staff will require specialist training provided by the ETF, which on review appears to be equivalent to the entry level initial teacher training that the government previously abolished a requirement for in 2012. It is of interest that the ETF have become heavily involved in this new educational offer by being the consultants in the teacher training offer and subsequent free training provision (AoC, 2019; ETF, 2019e; ETF, 2017a); it would appear that in offering free training this may be an act to bolster their credibility and membership as a professional body.

Another government initiative is to recruit industry specialists who have no teaching experience but would be provided with on the job training and some form of teacher training; this again appears to trivialise the knowledge and experience required to work in the sector and does not acknowledge that industry specialists are highly unlikely to move to a sector with incomparable pay (ETF, 2019b/c). Interestingly, in light of a sector which does not require teaching staff to be qualified, the ETF have joined forces with the newly formed Chartered College of Teaching (CCT) to further bolster their non mandatory professional formation route. This appears to be yet another attempt to validate the ETF's work and raise their profile in the sector through their award of Advanced Teacher Status (ATS) and conferred Chartered Teacher Status (CTS) through the CCT (CCT, 2019; ETF, 2017b; ETF, 2016). It is unclear why the ETF would provide another qualification route for teaching staff when there are already well established and recognised higher level teaching qualifications available such as the Post Graduate Certificate in Education (PGCE) or Certificate in Education (Cert Ed.). Additionally, there are no mandatory requirements to be qualified as a teacher in FE. It could be argued that the ETF are diversifying their offer in an attempt to gain a market share of income for teacher training qualifications. Recent workforce data collected on behalf of the ETF shows that the PGCE is the most popular form of teaching qualification in the sector, and is highly recognised, therefore competing with this type of well-established qualification may be risky in the long term due to the newness of the award and lack of sector recognition (ETF, 2019a; Gibb, 2017; Shedman, 2017). Current benefits of taking this pathway instead of the traditional PGCE route appear to be mainly linked to the costs: £850 one-off fee instead of the more costly post-graduate tuition fees of approximately £9250 per year, and a greatly reduced set of entry requirements compared to post-graduate study qualifications.

Recently, the first set of candidates to be awarded the Chartered Teacher Status were hailed as a 'prestigious qualification' and an 'alternative' (Peacock, 2019 np in ETF, 2019d) in addition to being an 'immense accomplishment and prov[ing] that they (teachers) are amongst the very best in the profession' (Russell, 2017 np in ETF, 2019d). So far only 52 FE teachers have achieved

this (ETF, 2019a), which in itself is a very small amount compared to the 31,000 teaching staff that work in the sector, of which the PGCE appears to be a popular choice. The latest figures from 2017-18 show that there were 1810 part time PGCE PCET students in total from Yr 1 and 2 combined (HESA, 2019). As the combined offer from the ETF and CCT is in its infancy, it will be interesting to see what value the Chartered Teacher Status brings to the sector in the current climate of FE teachers not requiring qualifications or professional membership to teach in the sector. Data shows that post deregulation there has been a decline in FE teachers engaging with higher level teaching and subject specialist qualifications, and a rise in unqualified FE teachers who hold no teaching qualifications or possess them only at entry level (ETF, 2019a). The beneficiaries of this have clearly been the educational organisations who have been able to, and continue to, set their own entry requirements for teaching in the sector which is now synonymous with low pay and an unstandardised profession; a consequence of removing previously legislated mandatory requirements (Belgutay, 2019; ETF, 2019a; ETF, 2019c; Shedman, 2017; Duckworth and Tummons, 2010).

2.2.0 The Marketisation of Further Education

As marketisation of the FE sector has grown steadily over the preceding thirty years, it has been, and still is, not without its own set of moral and ethical problems linked to its previous purpose (Sennet, 1998). Ball (2013: 136), argues that when education competes in an open market, 'we must make ourselves calculable rather than memorable. In regimes of performativity, experience is nothing, productivity is everything'. Historically, for FE teachers, morality and altruism was a key focus in helping individuals to develop and achieve, whereas now this may be somewhat displaced with education operating as a business; where data and performance are the key prioritisation areas.

Students as consumers have brought about widespread changes to the shape of FE provision, alongside the demands of employers as key stakeholders (Duckworth and Smith, 2018; Ovds, 2010; Sennett, 1998; Elliott and Hall, 1994). In education's open market, the education provision changes and

adapts to their demands which Sennett (1998) argues causes disruption; this then plays a pivotal role in order for businesses to become more profitable. He identifies several impacts on staff related to the 'volatility of consumer demand' such as staff being 'set adrift rather than rewarded' and the pressures of 'flexible specialization' (Sennett, 1998: 51), which seeks to widen the specialist knowledge of teachers to satisfy consumer demand. Although this only serves to alienate staff and dilute specialist knowledge when applied to FE teaching through application of policy and regulation.

On a final note, it is clear that the sector has developed rapidly to meet the demands of the government initially, and employers secondly, moving away from its traditional purpose and offerings. The increase in stakeholder involvement has resulted in the sector becoming answerable to many; marketisation and consumerism has fuelled this further, which for many is perceived as a negative development. The pressures on staff who work within the sector, under increasingly performative regimes, indicate in the literature that they are unhappy with their provision operating to ensure profitable outcomes by way of student achievements; in this landscape, student failure is not an option and ensuring achievements has been likened to working in a sausage factory to guarantee funding (Wallace, 2013; Jephcote and Latiner Raby, 2012; Lucas, 2004a; Smith, 2000). The literature indicates that the sector is in conflict with itself and its stakeholders as it tries to remain profitable whilst still providing a service to the many stakeholders involved; entangled within this are the teachers who are continuously trying to respond to the challenges of a service led, customer focused sector which largely deviates from the traditional moral purpose of continuing education pre 1970s. With the sector expansion, so too have the roles and responsibilities of FE teachers which makes it more difficult to clearly compare their professional identities and status to normative accounts of professionalism as their roles appear to lack definition and cohesion. In order to explore this further, the following section reviews normative accounts of what defines a profession, and a professional, and then finishes with a discussion on how they are applied to professionalism. This will provide a basis for further discussion on how FE

teachers orientate themselves professionally within the sector and form their professional identities.

2.3.0 Definitions of a Profession, Professional, and Professionalism

In order to structure my discussion on FE teacher professionalism, I have used the theories and models of professionalism from Hoyle (1972-2001) and Freidson (1970-2004) to identify what might characterise FE teacher professionalism, employing their frameworks as an aid in the development of my research questions to participants (Table 1). Additionally, several other authors have been key in forming a theoretical framework for my research such as Greenwood (1957) and Macdonald (1995) who both offer extensive insights into the historical underpinnings of how professions are defined and established. Finally, influenced by Ball's critiques of education (2013), I adopt Foucault's themes on identity, autonomy, and power/control to provide a rationale for how FE teacher professionalism is defined and enacted by FE teaching staff in the present day. It is important to review and explore the literature on definitions of *profession*, *professional* and *professionalism* as within the FE sector the terms are frequently used interchangeably and appear to have multiple, unclear meanings when applied to FE teachers and their work (IfL, 2014; Plowright and Barr, 2012; Clow, 2001). It is also important to recognise that in addition to the terms being used interchangeably, the terms also suffer from semantic satiation - the frequent use of a word/s which result in their loss of meaning and substance over time which may cause them to be misused as a consequence (Kanungo and Lambert, 1963: Jakobovits and Lambert, 1962).

2.3.1 Profession: Role identification and standing

There is an abundance of contemporary literature defining the term profession and its associated characteristics which serve to contribute and build on the extensive normative accounts currently in existence. For the purpose of this research, Freidson's (1994b) definition of a profession will foreground the collective characteristics and traits of other influential authors' parameters of a profession which have been utilised as a theoretical framework throughout the

research (Table 1). Freidson (1994b: 13) states that previously professions were clearly identified by a small list of characteristics:

> Honoured servants of public need… occupations especially distinguished from others by their orientation to serving the needs of the public through the schooled application of their unusually esoteric knowledge and complex skill'.

There was a recognition that this started to change in the 1960s as sociological writings on the professions increased and this started to include the influence of political and economic factors. Drawing on the literature at the time, Freidson (1994b: 16-17) identifies two 'usages' of the term profession which serve to differentiate between a profession and occupation: broad and limited. Broad is somewhat prestigious, associated with individuals who have a higher level of education and linked to educational status rather than specific skills. Limited is defined as a way of 'organising an occupation' (Johnson, 1972: 45) where there are commonalities in institutional and ideological traits which produce distinctive occupational identities; their work is exclusive and set apart from the work of others (Parkin, 1979). Freidson (1994b: 14) agrees that as sectors have evolved and widened, this has now facilitated 'overlap' between professions and occupations with the terms profession, professional, and professionalism being applied and understood differently as the labour markets have developed (Table 4). In terms of where FE teachers sit within these concepts, it would appear that over the last thirty years they appear to be moving between the two in terms of their professional identities.

From the literature it is evident that FE has seen a rapid transformation, particularly in the last 40 years, to become a service led sector; juxtaposing moral education and commodified education and this has influenced how those that work within it are perceived professionally (Appleyard and Appleyard, 2016; Shah, 2014). Historically, trait theory has been utilised as a model for defining whether an occupation is defined as profession, although this does not provide an easy fit in today's ever-changing education landscape; FE in itself is particularly difficult to clearly define (Appleyard and Appleyard, 2016; McCullough et al., 2000; Millerson, 1964; Goode, 1960, 1957). Trait theory defines the characteristics and traits of a profession and provides

reference points which signify if an occupation qualifies as a profession or not, usually this serves as an anchor point in distinguishing between professions and occupations (Table 2 and 4). Normative definitions of a profession state that a profession is classed as an advanced occupation, consisting of advanced or complex knowledge that goes beyond an occupation, is autonomous, and is associated with exclusivity (Table 3).

Additionally, the use of the words ‘highly’ and ‘lengthy’ are used frequently to differentiate the difference between a profession and an occupation, the lack of these terms infers that the role is of lower status and therefore cannot be classed as profession and is more aligned to an occupation (Hoyle, 1972; Lieberman, 1956) (Table 3). Macdonald (1995: 2) argues that in defining professions, a ‘reasoned approach’ is that of identifying traits; in using traits this provides a scale for which occupations can be assessed against in order to determine their levels of professionalism and if they can be regarded a profession in their entirety.

The Professional Continuum				
Identifiers of a profession	**FE teachers score**			**Supporting evidence from literature combined with themes from data collection**
	High	**Med.**	**Low**	
Control over entry/gatekeepers			X	There are low entry requirements since deregulation.
Systematic theory		X		Deregulation has reduced the need for this.
Authority			X	Reduced to having some authority in the classroom but stakeholders have greatly reduced teacher authority.
Community sanction			X	Membership of professional bodies is not mandatory therefore there are little repercussions apart from the employer.
Ethical codes		X		As above.
Culture			X	It is fractured due to the many roles an FE teacher carries out and the multiple discourses they are part of.
Rationality			X	FE teachers focus on practicalities rather than having a critical attitude towards the theoretical system.
Extensive education			X	Deregulation has reduced the need for this, alongside it provider support for extensive education has also reduced.
Privilege			X	Lack of status to indicate privilege and also pay and knowledge are not indicative of privilege.
Power			X	Funding regimes are now the drivers of power, power and autonomy have been lost to this alongside marketisation of the sector.
Control of its own training and accreditation			X	Lack of requirement for this, also training and accreditation is not mandatory since deregulation. Employers are now in control of this and are not promoting it as widely.
Immunity from community judgement		X		Employers now take care of this, mainly due to data and performativity linked to the data.

Table 3. – The professional continuum (adapted from Greenwood (1957) Determinants of Professionals).

There have been attempts to broaden professional traits by the government and various interested parties, to counteract the restrictive nature of historical models of a profession and address the depth of a teacher's work in addition to acknowledging the continuous changing environment of education. Hoyle (1972: 93) argues that in order to successfully define teaching as a profession, education, rather than teaching, should try to create a 'set of more widely shared values'; a useful suggestion but problematic when we consider the many roles and tasks teachers in general undertake. An interesting counterargument is provided by Macdonald (1995), that supports FE teaching being classed flexibly between a profession and occupation. Macdonald (1995) believes that actions rather than terms are more relevant to roles as the workforce becomes more diverse. He proposes that regardless of classification, profession or occupation, *professionalism* can be applied to occupations despite the occupations not meeting the criteria of a profession (Table 4). He argues that professionalism can be classed as an action rather than a structure; enacting professionalism, the focus being upon what an individual does as opposed to what they are defined as. Examples of this are carrying out visible actions which are considered as professional such as being ethical, having morals, being knowledgeable, and trustworthy (Macdonald, 1995). Taking this view, occupationalists can be classed as professionals offering significant relevance for FE teachers as their work does not easily fit into normative accounts of professionalism and identifiers of a profession. If the strict terms of a profession and an occupation are removed, and the focus is centred on actions (professionalism), then FE teachers evidence that they embody professionalism in their roles despite not being classed as working in a profession.

2.3.2 Gatekeepers

Compared to other work, there are a lack of gatekeepers for entry into FE teaching. The rationale for having gatekeepers has always been to 'vet' entry into a profession which therefore protects the status of the profession and maintains its exclusivity (Freidson, 2004; Hoyle, 1972; Greenwood, 1957). Gatekeepers are also symbols of power: they hold the authority to accept or reject, yet within FE there is a noticeable absence of gatekeepers

post deregulation of the sector. Since the revocation of The Further Education Teachers' Continuing Professional Development and Registration (England) Regulations in 2013 the gatekeepers of FE teacher professionalism have become the educational organisations themselves, alongside voluntary membership of a newly formed regulatory body, the Education and Training Foundation (ETF). This major change has been perceived to have done little to improve the professional image of the sector and the professional status of those who work within it (Shah, 2014: Norton, 2012).

It is inevitable that a sector with no mandatory professional membership or entry qualifications to work in the sector will result in a loss in professional standing compared to professionals in other sectors who have stringent gatekeepers. Macdonald (1995: xiii) argues that 'the origins of any profession lie in the existence of an area of knowledge which those who possess it are able to isolate from social knowledge generally, and establish a special claim to'. Oliver (2010; 39) too adds substance to this argument by stating that 'in the most direct way, an education system provides access to a specialized knowledge, which thus helps to determine who is viewed as an 'expert' or specialist in society'. The removal of gatekeepers in determining entry based upon specialist knowledge has effectively acted to weaken further any future claims that FE teaching has in being classed as a profession. If the entry requirements to employment are low, this may provide further justification to outsiders that the sector is not exclusive and high status, further devaluing those who work in FE and the students who access it.

2.3.3 The Education and Training Foundation as gatekeepers

From May 2015, the ETF became the self-appointed gatekeepers for FE teacher professionalism. They took over the deregulated sector, which was previously regulated by the IfL, whose compulsory membership was abolished as part of The Lingfield Report recommendations. The previous year, in anticipation of the IfL's collapse, the ETF published its professional standards for the sector which remain unchanged since their first release in 2014 (Appendix II). Upon close review, the standards are split into three areas, values and attributes, knowledge and understanding, and professional skills;

they are basic and vague at the very least (one page) and appear to be aligned with the daily work of a teacher and what is expected of them as opposed to having the ability to measure professionalism against them through a clear set of competencies. It is of interest that within the standards there is no mention of the word *'profession'* at all in acting to support the adoption of professional standards. The expectations of FE teachers in fulfilling and achieving the standards are also questionable as they are set out as statements which are not clearly defined or possess the ability to be explicitly achievable. Thompson (2014: 47) argues this observation below:

> They are in fact more-or-less broad statements of the things teachers might be expected to value, know or do at any stage of their career, and sometimes make unwarranted assumptions about the degree of consensus there might be around certain points, for example the theoretical underpinning of what the standards describe as effective practice.

Whereas previously, IfL's main aim was to promote member excellence through a qualification route and standardised evidence of competencies, ETF's main aim appears to be to satisfy employer performative demands from both inside and outside of the workplace. FE teacher professionalism appears to be now managed through an employer led professional body rather than a member led professional body where the focus is upon student outcomes as opposed to developing and maintaining professional standing for the benefit of the students as end users; future employers have now become the end users.

If the ETF's professional standards are compared to normative accounts of professional traits and characteristics associated with a professional, there are some tentative links to be found such as: maintaining and updating CPD, and applying theory to practice, but this encompasses only two of the standards from a list of twenty which are clearly aligned to an FE teachers' day to day work. The ETFs professional standards are performative in nature but fall short of being measurable or accountable for staff due to the vagueness and also voluntary nature of adhering to the standards post deregulation. At the very best they can be used for guidance in the current unregulated professional climate but do not offer a credible definitive guide on FE teacher professional

standards if compared to professional standards from other sectors such as nursing or policing.

2.3.4 Status

Normative accounts state that in order for a role to be considered a profession, it must be high status (Table 1). The literature informs us that there are both positive and negative portrayals of the FE sector and those that work within it. It could be construed that perceptions are not important as long as the role is performed adequately, but teachers themselves place value on perceptions as they are used as a measure of quality, to benchmark their status and to gauge esteem in the profession (Hargreaves et al., 2007; Postlethwaite, 1999; Little and McLaughlin, 1993). As a consequence, patterns of behaviour are associated with the position and there are expectations of the person in the position from both internal and external environments. Hoyle (1972) rationalises that if society holds these beliefs and expectations about teachers, and teachers then use them as a measurement of status, this may lead to teachers judging themselves negatively if they feel that they do not adhere to societal expectations. The well-publicised narratives regarding expectations of teachers and how they are perceived suggest that there are still mixed views of the sector today with literature weighted towards the profession being affected by perceptions from both inside and outside of the sector which inevitably will impact on status.

It has been identified through several government reviews that the sector and FE teachers have been perceived to be doing relatively well under difficult circumstances; with staff being praised for their diversity during consistent and persistent change (Hayes in DBIS, 2012; Eurobarometer, 2011; Morris, 2001). However, the pressure to do more adds to a teacher's sense of failure and perceptions of low value if what they are already being praised for is later targeted for improvement or becomes irrelevant due to policy change. The value of FE teaching remains a contentious issue due to differing viewpoints, and stakeholder influence, which teachers have to digest and compete with on a regular basis; this is from both inside and outside of sector. Lingfield (DBIS, 2012: 18) states that 'both the sector and its staff need to be treated with

greater care and respect than has sometimes been the case in the past', acknowledging previous instability in the sector and the issues surrounding FE teacher status.

If we look to the more widely studied sectors of compulsory and higher education, the literature illustrates there are divides in sector perceptions with HE holding the highest regard and the primary sector having the lowest status (Shah, 2014: Norton, 2012: Hargreaves et al., 2007); Hoyle (2001) attributes this to the clientele that is being taught. He argues that if children, who have low social status, are your main clients then by association the teacher will also attract low status. Evidence shows that there is increased status for secondary school teachers, as they prepare students for exams, but unfortunately lower status for FE teachers who provide for learners deemed as low socio-economic class (Hughes, 2004). Teachers are now expected to 'undertake a repair function on behalf of society' (Hoyle, 2001: 141), and education has had to change to meet the needs of a society which in itself is ever changing; a society that has very different demands of education post industrialisation, with a clear focus on the intrinsic needs of students.

FE teachers are now working more closely with their students in a caring capacity in order to maintain student success and achievement, and this may be impacting on professional status due to their vocational links (Hoyle, 1972). Harland (1987) suggests that those who teach vocational subjects are subjected to academic snobbery due to beliefs that less skill and knowledge are required to teach them (Shah, 2014: DBIS, 2012: Norton, 2012: Little and Mclaughlin, 1993). These beliefs and perceptions may have been amplified by the government's acceptance of Lingfield's recommendations for deregulation of FE teachers and as a consequence are impacting on the status of the sector as a result.

2.4.0 Professional: Identity and distinctive practice

Traditional views of a professional offer normative accounts that are recognised as an important factor for teachers to contextualise and frame their work as part of a recognised group (Appleyard and Appleyard, 2016; Lucas, 2013). However, in the literature, there are 'gaps', alongside confusion, when

the definitions of a professional for teachers in FE are discussed (Appleyard and Appleyard, 2016; DBIS, 2012; Robson, 2006; Freidson, 1994a). This 'grey area' is an issue because it is recognised that teachers in FE draw professional constructs from sectors which are historically already 'well defined': the compulsory sector and higher education. Yet they operate in a highly diverse environment which may not 'sit' comfortably within the two or provide recognisable points of reference despite their commonality being education (The Policy Consortium, 2014; Apple, 2010; Edward et al., 2005; Gleeson et al., 2004).

The established sources drawn on for this literature review, illustrate that there is general agreement on the characteristics and traits of a professional; an individual who is highly qualified, in control of their own work, and is of high status (Hoyle, 2001; Freidson, 2004; Greenwood, 1957). An alternative viewpoint offered by Hall (1996: 17) argues that:

> Identities are never unified and, in late modern times, increasingly fragmented and fractured; never singular but multiply constructed across different, often intersecting and antagonistic discourses, practices and positions. They are subject to a radical historicization, and we are constantly in the process of change and transformation.

Hall's work is applicable to FE teachers and their professional identities, particularly in relation to 'intersecting and antagonistic discourses' over the past 20 years. Despite their points of reference for their own professionalism being clearly defined through a professional body like the ETF, legislation does not require teachers to be members of a professional body, or qualified in order to carry out their work; this carries implications for the reinforcement of professional identities in FE as FE teachers themselves become the regulators of their professionalism.

For FE teachers, the difficulty lies in pinning down exactly what it means to be a professional in FE as over the last twenty years in particular many other definitions of a professional in teaching have arisen which now form a rich, albeit confusing, picture, of what being a professional in the education sector involves. If we view the education sector as a whole, Hoyle (2001) argues that

there is evidence for cross sector shared professional values, beliefs and assumptions; the difficulty in applying this to FE teachers is that the abundance of values, beliefs and assumptions which exist just in FE alone, meaning that there are no clear delineations of specific normative behaviours for FE teachers, which may affect personal orientation when it comes to construction of FE teacher professional identities (Bathmaker and Avis, 2005).

2.5.0 Professionalism: Individual practice and activity

The standard dictionary definition of 'professionalism' states it is 'the combination of all the qualities that are connected with trained and skilled people' (Cambridge Dictionaries online, 2017b: np) and is associated with individuals having 'great skill and ability' (Oxford Learner's Dictionaries, 2017: np). What it does not state is that it is directly associated with a profession and can be enacted independently from working in a profession. Unfortunately, these simplistic definitions do not offer terms which can be readily, or easily applied to FE teacher professionalism, due to the unregulated context which FE teachers operate in; aligning with the recurring debates that professionalism is notoriously difficult to define and is habitually undermined by official discourses of teacher professionalism 'that often lack any clear meaning' (McCullough et al., 2000: 14). Freidson (1994b) himself, a leading author on professionalism in education, even states that arriving at a universal definition of professionalism for teachers in general that everyone can agree on is practically unachievable. What is of interest here is the work of Macdonald (1995: 1) who also acknowledges that the term professional 'has a wide range of uses in everyday speech, many of which are value laden' and inconsequential due to the overuse of the word itself. Citing Wittgenstein, Macdonald (1995: 35) states, 'don't ask for the meaning, ask for the use' suggesting that perhaps there is an obsession in tying down what the meaning is, whereas how it is used in practice is more important.

2.5.1 Enacting Professionalism

Hoyle (1972: 91) defines professionalism in teaching as:

> professional interactions which 'generates a distinctive culture embracing its fundamental values, the norms which govern the

> behaviour of members, and its symbols-including its history, folklore, special vocabulary, insignia, and stereotypes (attributed to Greenwood, 1962).

The challenge here is that the diverse practice of FE teachers implies that distinctive and standardised norms are not readily created or upheld within FE teaching practice as the sector is in a constant cycle of change. Conversely, McCullough et al., (2000: 14) suggest that professionalism is not fixed, does not require to be fixed, and is mobile; they believe professionalism should be viewed 'as a form of ideology' that has evolved from all contexts, and this could offer an alternative option for FE teachers. The authors further argue that the concept of professionalism is 'based on the notion of an 'educational myth' (p 17), open to interpretation and defined differently by individuals and groups based on their knowledge and experience. Yet the 'myth' of professionalism is repeatedly expressed in government policy and legislation, and cannot be readily dismissed when defining the parameters of FE teacher professionalism.

Previously, Hoyle (1972) identified that there were two distinct types of teaching role in existence; pre-industrialisation (transmit knowledge and values) and post industrialisation (skills and education for social justice). The post industrialist role is pertinent to FE due to the marketisation of the sector, with a move towards education for employment as opposed to personal development (Duckworth and Smith, 2018). James et al. (1999) suggest that the role has moved away from the notions of traditional teaching, to impart knowledge, with a greater emphasis on administration inside and outside of the learning environment (The Policy Consortium, 2014; Edward et al., 2005; Hoyle, 2001; Randle and Brady, 2005). In particular, from 2000 onwards, challenges were being made to the traditional notions of teachers possessing power, through freedom to work autonomously, by placing them within bureaucratic and administrative frameworks, which Oliver (2010) argues allowed the state to take control of individuals and enforce power over teachers. Within FE, the regulation of the sector through various legislative mechanisms including: government professional frameworks; more intense Ofsted inspections; delegation of overseeing bodies; and specific professional

bodies, targeted FE teachers fairly rapidly in succession and attempted to standardise FE teacher professional identity in a short space of time.

The loose definitions, frameworks and standards of professionalism for FE teachers which guided the sector were disregarded in favour of trying to quickly normalise FE teacher professional behaviours through a set of new performative regulations in 2007. Normative accounts of professionalism state that as a professional, it is expected that individuals are highly qualified and accountable but in a sector where this had not been previously adhered to; sweeping and monumental changes of this size were not readily welcomed, leaving FE teachers feeling that they were suddenly being micro managed (Appleyard and Appleyard, 2016; Wallace, 2013). These changes gave rise to FE teacher professionalism being newly defined and characterised as 'dual professionalism', and later on suggestions of being aligned to 'triple professionalism'; adding to the expanding discourse of professionalism in FE (ETF, 2014: Spours in IfL, 2014).

Advocates for the regulations, mainly the government and the selected professional body (IfL), argued that professionalising the sector raised status, and also quality, due to teaching staff having to be qualified and going through professional formation. Despite this, after only five years of implementation the government revoked the regulations blaming the unions for opposing the changes and also citing requirements to save on expenditure (DfE, 2013a). From this intense period of professionalisation and de-professionalisation, it is evident that professionalism in FE operated at two extremes between 2007-2012; FE teachers became a high profile focus for the government and the IfL, then fairly soon afterwards their professionalism was dropped like a metaphorical hot potato (Wallace, 2013). The aftermath resembles a very fractured professional landscape post professional formation and has done nothing to improve the professional status or standing of FE teachers in its wake.

Following on from dual professionalism, triple professionalism has been suggested as a suitable model for FE teaching staff to utilise (IfL, 2014; Hodgson and Spours, 2013). As in dual professionalism, teaching staff should

be subject experts and teaching experts, but additionally they should also be community partners; their work should go beyond the walls of their workplace and extend into commercial and partnership activities. Spours (in IfL, 2014) states that dual professionalism was previously good enough, but critically claimed it was not enough for teaching staff who work in a changing sector; triple professionalism bridged the gap for the growing necessity to be creative and more innovative in order to recruit and retain students (IfL, 2014). In a sector where professional framework adherence is now optional it may be asking FE teaching staff too much to add this new element of professionalism to their repertoire; additionally many teaching staff are already doing or expected to do this as part of their role within their organisations and are therefore are enacting triple professionalism implicitly.

2.5.2 Power and Control

As the sector has evolved, so too has the struggle for power, and there are indications that a normal response to perceived challenges over who holds power, results in a closing of ranks (Ball, 2013; Edward et al., 2005); this has been evident in the recurring oppositions from teachers regarding continuous policy and regulation change from the late 1970s to the early 1980s, and currently over pay and working conditions (Appendix I). Simons (1988) claimed that by ignoring deeply held beliefs about professionalism, based on tradition and ideology, the government could claim more control of teachers through continuous reviews and subsequent changes in policy, regulations, and standards under the guise of the developing professionalism; what the government failed to acknowledge during these successive changes were that professionalism takes time to develop, and is not gained immediately upon enacting changes (Beaty, 2000).

Empirical evidence illustrates that there were, and still are, power struggles within the discourse of teacher professionalism mainly linked to status and pay; gaining momentum from the 1970s onwards and linked to recurring policy change. In the late 1970s, teachers' beliefs about professionalism were being brought into question as it was perceived that traditions were being manipulated in order to dominate and overpower them, through policy directly

impacting on their practice thus reducing power (Gillard, 2018). Regular contentious issues between teachers and stakeholders from the 1980s onwards were also mainly concerned with reduction of autonomy, and increase in performativity, resulting in both high profile and low profile power struggles. Grace (1990: 195) observed that these power struggles were clearly evident within the education sector and identified them as 'crises and settlements': changes were suggested and made by stakeholders, some individuals and groups opposed them, crises occurred, and then afterwards settlement ensued, albeit for a short time until the next one occurred. This process is cyclic and recurring, reflecting how change in the sector is constant, and opposition is an expected behaviour as part of workplace autonomy and established ways of working being challenged. Grace (1990) identified that crises and settlements were inevitable due to the complex nature of education and the recurring tensions between dominant and subordinate groups; groups who constantly challenge each other and seek to resolve/compromise until another crisis occurs. Within the literature, it suggests that in the FE sector, FE teachers appear to be the subordinate group; stakeholders present themselves as the dominant group either in their individual forms or as a united group, in either form they hold the greater power. Teachers are aware that they are the subordinate group within the education sector, and are disempowered within the educational discourse which has led to greater reliance from the Unions to represent them more widely as a marginalised group during consistent change (Swann et al., 2010; UCU, 2009).

2.5.3 Observation

As FE has evolved and the FE teacher role has become increasingly performative, the regular practices of observing teachers in two main ways (through session observation and reviews of data) offer another opportunity for employers and stakeholders to reduce autonomy and associated power for FE teachers. Within education as a whole, observation has become an embedded feature of the education landscape; a feature which takes on a variety of forms and is not without opposition itself from those being observed (O'Leary, 2015: Hope, 2013; Shortland, 2004). Observation's negative association with autocracy and oppression have ensured that teachers are wary of the practice

and many regard it as an imposition and interference in their work (Hope, 2013). Being observed, or the thought of being observed, has a tangible link to how individuals regulate themselves if they are aware that they are being watched. It also brings into question who holds more power; the observer, or the observee? (Foucault, 1994). Ordinarily, this may now be an accepted practice in teaching, but for FE teachers this may be problematic due to being observed from a variety of perspectives with differing expectations. In a reformed FE system, teachers are now more exposed than they were previously. Hoyle (2001: 141) refers to this as leaving 'little in the way of professional mystique' and Hope (2013: 43) agrees that as a result 'teachers are equally on display'. Hoyle's (1972: 85) insightful historic account on teacher professionalism observed that an increasing number of professionals are 'becoming subject to more bureaucratic control…coming under more public scrutiny and control' and, over forty years later, we have evolved to become the 'viewer society'. Our daily life is composed of being observed and judged accordingly from a variety of perspectives.

There is also evidence that stereotypes of teachers exist within the public domain and are usually derived for one's own experience of education (Hoyle, 1972); teachers are observed in the image of what already exists in the individuals' own psyche. As with all stereotyping, stereotypes can act to either support or oppose positive and negative perceptions of individuals. As the majority of the public have encountered being taught and have experiences of education; this suggests that images of teachers are already pre-determined by individuals based upon their own experiences and provides possibilities for them to be judged based on an individual's previous educational experiences (Hoyle, 1972). As a result of this, FE teachers are placed in a difficult position as they try to conform to societal norms, and expectations, that are wide ranging and at the same time individualistic in terms of their professionalism (Hoyle, 1974); a tricky path to walk perfectly in the public eye.

2.5.4 Autonomy

Traditionally, one of the main indicators of a profession was the freedom to be autonomous; this provided individuals with the power to control their own work.

A significant amount of literature suggests that autonomy is an assumed right as a professional according to normative accounts; this in itself is a contentious issue in a marketised sector where autonomy is not easily or readily promoted or recognised. Prior to the late 1970s, FE teachers operated in a much freer sector, arguably the offer was very different; yet FE teachers had a high level of autonomy from the state and also within their workplaces. This era commonly referred to in literature as the 'secret garden' or 'golden age', ended abruptly in the 1980s for school teachers initially due to the introduction of the National Curriculum and later on for FE teachers with the Standards for Teaching and Learning (Hammond, 2004: FENTO, 1999; Eccles, in Hansard, 1960). The government deemed that the autonomy teachers were enjoying allowed too much freedom and a lack of accountability therefore it had to end; as a consequence, teachers had their freedom gradually removed and became more accountable to others (Wallace, 2013; Grace, 1990).

It is accepted that professions are recognised as having a level of autonomy from the state, and a high level of autonomy from within their workplaces; for FE teachers there is a severe lack of both of these whilst working in a marketised and highly performative sector post 1980. Practically all levels of autonomy have been removed from FE teachers as a result of government policy and legislation; professional autonomy for FE teachers appears to have declined considerably as a consequence. This aspect of professionalism seems to be the most widely contested element of teacher professionalism as a whole, and as professional autonomy has gradually eroded in the compulsory sector, FE has rapidly followed through continuous government intervention in teachers' business (Hargreaves et al., 2007; Bathmaker and Avis, 2005; McCullough et al., 2000). The power of consumer choice in education over the freedom of those who are categorised as 'serving' them lends further weight to Oliver's (2010: 120) argument that 'the complexity of society has in many ways reduced the autonomy of individuals'. Government power, imposed through marketisation of FE, limits FE teacher autonomy, and has also eroded it substantially over the last 20 years, and continues to this day. The silencing of the voices of FE staff, through lack of consultation in key reviews, and changes to educational offers and practices, signals that their

status lacks value and any hopes of autonomy returning are low; thus moving further away from their work being considered a profession in its own right.

2.6.0 Concluding Remarks

Inconsistencies in the definitions for the FE sector's offer, and clearly identifying the roles of those that work within it, are problematic. It is not surprising that defining FE teaching as a profession, and definitions of a teaching professional, are unclear due to the multiple points of reference provided in literature and policy where there is considerable overlap and borrowing of terms. Additionally, the terms professional and professionalism appear to be used extensively and repeatedly to mean a wide variety of things to different people; so much so, that their meanings appear to be inconsistent and have become diluted from overuse and misplaced application. Due to this, the concept of FE teacher professionalism has opened itself up to being problematised (Ball, 2013); literature either specifies in a prescriptive manner what it consists of to be an FE teacher professional and what FE teacher professionalism is, almost checklist in style, or has multiple and additional terms which cause the definitions to overlap and become all encompassing. This therefore makes it difficult to extrapolate a definitive, agreeable term for defining professionalism in FE teaching which is distinct to the sector. Support for this can be seen in the work of Freidson (1994b: 27) who argues that 'the many perspectives from which it [professionalism] can legitimately be viewed, and from which sense can be made of it, preclude the hope of any widely accepted definition of general analytical value'. Kimball's (1992) work is of interest here as it is evident that the sector and FE teachers' work is highly changeable and responsive; Kimball (1992) suggests that as society changes, then so too should the meaning of terms such as professionalism. This he argues is a natural evolution of terminology, and is applicable to how the role of a teacher has evolved from when normative accounts were first established.

Empirical evidence suggests that FE teachers in general are not responding well to what they perceive to be attacks on their professionalism and are struggling with conflicting policies which may be perceived as an

uncomfortable fit in their expansive roles. Ontologically, it would appear that FE teachers think that FE teaching is a profession and involves specialised work, therefore should not be interfered with, but policy and regulation are leaning towards being against this due to the lack of autonomy and recent deregulation which has been imposed on them. Hall and Marsh (2000: 11) empathise with the suggestion of FE teachers having an ongoing identity crisis, stating, 'to people outside education, FE teachers appear as an anomalous group, with an ambivalent status and unclear identity'. Policy and legislation from 2000 onwards documents the rise, and some would argue the fall, of FE teacher professionalism through the state's continuous aims to 'professionalise' and find parity for the sector; this has never been carried out entirely successfully for a variety of reasons and continues to be an ongoing issue. The work of Macdonald (1995), is of particular interest regarding FE teaching as a profession at this point; he argues that professions and occupations can, and do, rub shoulders with each other and suggests that you can have professional occupations. This provides an alternative landscape for FE teachers to operate in, as teaching meets many of the accepted professional criteria in part, but not in full. They illustrate that they are a discrete set of individuals who do not fit into one professional model or framework, and have affiliation with multiple professional characteristics and traits across several models and frameworks.

There are also conflicting ideals within FE, some of which can be attributed to autocracy, and its accompanying consequence, bureaucracy. Despite being given power over their own professionalism through deregulation, FE teachers have become regulated in many other ways which stifle freedom and control over their own work. Within the sector there is far more control of FE teachers compared to the past, as FE teachers operate under the guise of performativity and their ability to concede to managerialist demands; FE has evolved into a highly performative sector with the dominant culture now being of *markets* (Handy, 1993). The key indicators of a marketised sector, which appear to be rejected by many education staff, are competition, top down management, and judgment based on results. These three elements are illustrative of how FE is being operated and what FE staff are being judged on in the current climate,

and could be indicative of why FE teachers feeling they have no control over their work; and subsequently their professional identities. Despite post deregulation, with the management of FE teacher professionalism being handed over to employers and individuals themselves, there appears to be little acceptance that it is anyone's responsibility in particular. Currently, the lack of standardisation of the professional boundaries and requirements for FE teachers compared to other established professions supports the difficulties FE teachers are experiencing in clarifying their own professional identities. Unfortunately, for a teacher in FE it is unclear who is ultimately in control of their professionalism.

The literature leads us to believe that in general, teachers are struggling to accept and administer what they believe are politically motivated changes when their own beliefs and views are classed as polarised if they oppose change. Who is in control of their professional identities is also in turmoil, alongside FE being in continuous conflict regarding its overall purpose. Grace (1990) alluded to the notion that power struggles are a regular occurrence within teaching and this would always be so; Bathmaker and Avis (2005) attribute this to forming and reforming of professional identities, arguably an unavoidable process in a constantly evolving sector. The many perspectives that teaching can be viewed as, as a profession and also as an occupation reflect currency in Grace's (1990) prediction almost 30 years later; FE teachers are now fighting more than ever for professional status and recognition. How FE teachers establish and feel about their professional identities is a key area for further research. On a final note, the work of Macdonald (1995) focuses upon practical application of the term *'professional'* rather than trying to define it, and if, as Abbott (1998) suggests 'we leave 'the matter of meaning to one side', professionalism in FE teaching is actually easier in this present day to see than to actually try and define (in Macdonald, 1995: 35).

In order to explore and provide clarity on this issue, which literature confirms in its complexity within the FE landscape, the research questions are restated below:

1. How do normative accounts of a profession shape FE teacher professionalism?

2a. What is FE teacher professional identity?

b. Who/what are the influences on FE teacher professionalism

3. How do FE teachers think and act professionally?

These questions will support exploration of the views, experiences, and understanding of FE teachers on professionalism in the sector and provide an insight into how they form their professional identities within the FE landscape.

Chapter 3. Methodology and Research Design

3.0.0 Introduction

This chapter outlines the design and methods of research and begins with a discussion and rationale for using Foucault's (1994) key themes in the *problematisation* of the subject and how this supported the research design. It then moves onto discuss the methodological approach and sampling strategy used; a qualitative approach, using a case study and purposive sample. The ethical considerations surrounding the research will also be explored and discussed, in particular how my ontological and epistemological position has shaped the research and the implications of being an 'insider' to the research. Additionally, the steps taken to ensure that participants come to no harm will be evaluated for their robustness throughout and beyond the research process. The strengths and limitations of the data collection methods will be discussed alongside the steps that have been taken to ensure trustworthiness throughout the research design and process. Finally, the data collection methods and techniques for analysis will be reviewed and justified; for this research it consists of a pilot questionnaire, exploratory questionnaire, focus groups and interviews. To conclude this chapter, the links between the theoretical framework, literature, and research design will be drawn together to illustrate that the methodology and methods used are appropriate and robust.

3.1.0 The Influence of Foucault within the Research

In this study, Foucault's work on the concepts of problematisation, power, and control are employed to develop a critical perspective on FE teacher professionalism (Niesche, 2016). The research is not a Foucauldian study but draws on Foucault's work as a relevant 'toolbox' in order to 'interrogate problems and forge new questions to understand the present, and how we might conceive it differently' (Niesche, 2016: 118). The work of Foucault (1978), initially through the lens of Ball (2013: 5), spoke to me about how meaning is understood and made through 'rules and regularities rather than an epistemological (claims to truth) level of knowledge'. Intuitively, I could see how Foucault's theories on the interplay between power relations

(governmentality), and the role of the government and everyday practices (biopower) are relatable to the issues which are particularly apparent in the professional identity of FE teachers and the context they work within. In reviewing Foucault's key themes on power and control, I was able to utilise his work to map where literature and data converged; this produced strong thematic areas for discussion as data was collated, and illustrated that there were clear issues with power and control within professional identity formation for FE teachers.

Foucault defines problematisation as a critical analysis of a specific area and constitutes it as a work of thought. Thomson (2013) elaborates on this by suggesting that an abundance of practitioner research starts from a perceived issue or problem, and this then lends itself well to becoming problematised as an effective part of the research process. The process of taking an issue and problematising it consists of taking steps to unpack the problem and explore assumptions associated with it, then consider implications and the effects on individuals and society. In this research, the concept of FE teacher professionalism as a whole has been identified as an issue through critical analysis and reflexive accounting, and readily aligns with the concept of being problematised. The 'issue' of FE teacher professionalism draws parallels with Foucault's (1977: 185-186) work on problematisation in two distinct forms: 'thinking problematically', and identifying determinants of particular issues. Problematisation frames the research, as there are issues with defining clearly what the purpose of FE is, and as a result defining FE teacher professionalism; this can be attributed to the many changes to the sector since the 1990s.

Inconsistencies as to whether FE teaching is a profession, and subsequently the struggles identified in the literature of FE teacher professional identity, lend themselves well to utilising problematisation as a method for analysis as well as a tool for exploration of how it came to be an issue in the first place. By approaching professionalism in FE as a problem, which is to be broken down and examined through the study of relationships, specifically focusing on 'connections, encounters, supports, blockages, plays of forces [and] strategies', it provides opportunities to explore the situations that have led to

the ‘issue’ being defined as it is (Foucault, 1991: 76). Using Foucault as a lens supports investigating and critically analysing the ‘issue’ of FE teacher professionalism by way of an exploration into the obstacles and difficulties that surround it.

Another aspect of Foucault’s work which is influential in this research is the concept of governmentality and subsequently, biopower. Foucault’s (1994) concept of ‘governmentality’, organised practices through which individuals are governed and controlled, has also been used to explore how FE teacher professionalism is shaped and perceived by teachers themselves through various discourses of governance (Mendanth, 2016). It is of particular interest how the state’s techniques and procedures act upon FE teachers professional behaviour, ‘through the many and varied capillaries of power’, and how identity is shaped through the influence of others; particularly the government (Ball, 2013: 60). Foucault (1994: 341) argues that government does not ‘refer only to political structures or to the management of states’ but also designates ‘the way in which the conduct of individuals or of groups might be directed’; this is an important aspect of how FE teachers form and maintain their professional identities. Governmentality includes ‘modes of action, more or less considered and calculated, that [are] destined to act upon the possibilities of action of other people. To govern, in this sense, is to structure the possible field of action of others’ (Foucault, 1994, p. 341). Using the lens of governmentality offers insights into the different discourses of professionalism in education and how these differing discourses impact and influence FE teachers professional identities (Davies and Bansel, 2007).

An additional meaningful aspect of Foucault’s (1992) work is the concept of biopower; the struggle that exists amid ‘the regulatory and the disciplinary…what we might roughly call policy and practice’ (Ball, 2013: 60). Surrounding this concept is the notion of regulating individuals through rules and regulations, enforcing conformity, acceptance of conformation as normative behaviour (compliance and self-regulation), and finally disciplining those that do not fall within the norms which have been accepted as the ‘truth’. As power has been increasingly shifting from teachers to the state and other

stakeholders, there are now competing discourses of power which are highly influential on how FE teachers operate and identify themselves as professionals in their own right, and as a homogenous group (Ball, 2013; Oliver, 2010). FE teachers' beliefs about their professional identities, as they have travelled through the mechanisations of biopower, from professionalisation to de-professionalisation and then re-professionalisation, illustrate and evidence how power struggles have arisen, and are disrupting a clear sense of FE teacher professional identities and professionalisation of their work in the current climate.

3.2.0 Paradigmatic Basis of the Research

In any form of academic research, theory serves to act as an explanation of the data and phenomena, through the paradigms the researcher is drawn to for their particular piece of research (Guba and Lincoln, 1994). Therefore, if I am to explore and provide an understanding of the phenomena regarding FE teacher professionalism, it must be 'underpinned by theory' (Gray, 2009: 10). Historically, research within the social sciences has tended to fall into two dominant epistemological paradigms; positivist and constructivist (interpretivist) (Robson, 2011; Cresswell, 1994). Cresswell (1994) states that there are assumptions linked to each paradigm and it is these assumptions which attract the researcher into utilising them as the most appropriate methods for carrying out the research. By taking into consideration the researcher's epistemological and ontological stance and looking at what questions are being asked, both of the research and within it, this serves to guide the researcher into the most suitable and beneficial paradigm to adopt in their methodological approach (Cohen et al., 2011).

The positivist paradigm is concerned with what can be observed by the senses, an approach, which mainly implies that 'the results of research will tend to be presented as objective facts and established truths' (Gray, 2009: 19). Due to positivist research having strong links with physical science, for this study there is a sense of detachment when this approach utilises statistical data and speaks with an 'impersonal voice' (Cresswell, 1994: 5). Where FE teacher professionalism is concerned 'knowing is not linear, it is complex; nor is it

objective in any simple observable or measurable sense because it is infused with the subjectivity of the person doing the knowing' (Lovat, 2013: 7); it is a concept that cannot be easily measured or quantified. Interpretivism offers an opposing view, in that 'meaning does not exist in its own right; it is constructed by human beings as they interact and engage in interpretation' (Robson, 2011: 24) (Table 4) and by virtue mostly eliminates a positivist approach due to values and beliefs being difficult to quantify. In crude terms, if we assume that positivist approaches' main aims are to measure, and that the world is 'knowable' and 'predictable', then it is apparent that using this approach will not support studies of a social concept that is difficult to define such as FE teacher professionalism (O'Leary, 2007: 5).

In contrast to positivism, the main feature of interpretivist research is that it is emergent and 'emphasizes the world of experience as it is lived, felt and undergone by people acting in social situations' (Robson, 2011: 24). In this study, this is a more favourable approach, as I am conducting research with humans based on perceptions where there is a lack of clarity on established facts and truths in relation to FE teacher professionalism (Murphy, 2013; Blaikie, 2007). It has already been established that detachment does not form part of my epistemological and ontological perspective as the study was initiated by my beliefs and values in teacher professionalism: values and voices are important to me. The existing literature only serves to emphasise that FE teacher professionalism is complex, multi-dimensional and unclear; there are many 'voices' apparent in the discourse who have differing realities of what FE teacher professionalism is. By using an interpretivist approach, I am focusing on truth and meaning 'as constructed and interpreted by individuals' (Gray, 2009: 201); this is in opposition to seeking a universal truth regarding FE teacher professionalism.

Influence	Foucault - Problematisation
Ontological position	Social reality is constructed through individuals making meaning from people's perceptions and particular positions

Epistemological position	Criteria for knowledge is theory and value laden, truth is relative, situated and contextual
Positionality	Situated within the research and reflexive/critical
Paradigm	Qualitative/Constructivist
Approach/purpose	Inductive/Interpretative ● the how? ● the why? ● lived experiences to explore problems ● elicit meaning ● expand understanding ● allows for complexity ● illuminates social processes ● gives meaning to social phenomenon ● theory building
Strategies of inquiry	Case study

Table 4. – Philosophical underpinning which influences methodology based on the work of Foucault (1954-2001), Freidson, (1970-2004) and 2001).

As an FE teacher myself, my thought processes are situated in how I, and others, construct truth based on values, beliefs and subjectivity (Lovat, 2013; Robson, 2011; Gray, 2009). Ontologically, I believe that social reality is constructed through individuals making meaning from people's perceptions and particular positions: it is subjective rather than objective (Cresswell, 1994). Epistemologically and axiologically, I believe the criteria for knowledge is theory and value laden; truth is relative, situated and contextual (Cresswell, 1994). This value led approach, and the desire to capture, understand and project 'voices' as an end product, are an important motivation of this work (Table 4). By the nature of these beliefs, I am situated within the research as a reflexive and critical 'insider' who seeks through lived experience to explore the problem of teacher professionalism in FE and elicit greater meaning and subsequently attracts me to the constructivist, qualitative paradigm.

Approaching the studies from a constructivist paradigm relates to my own beliefs about truth and reality; I am living, thinking and experiencing being a teacher in the field of FE, constructing reality based upon values and experience related to ‘human action’ (Lovat, 2013: 80). My role as an educator and Doctoral student constantly challenges my perceptions of truth and reality and there are ongoing internal conversations occurring regarding what I perceive to be the 'nature of knowledge' and the subjectivity of truth (McWilliam and Tan, 2010: 45). In this research I am seeking to provide insights into the profession, not the 'truth,' and my positioning is such that the truth cannot be based on fact alone; it is subjective based on thoughts, feelings and opinions gained from lived experience. By adopting a constructivist approach, this provides me with better positioning for carrying out research 'focusing on meanings' (Gray, 2009: 200), as opposed to a positivist approach which would seek to deductively arrive at a truth through 'the rigour of numbers' (McWilliam and Tan, 2010: 44).

3.3.0 Methodological Approach

FE Teacher professionalism sits within the parameters of social research; social research focuses 'on human beings in social situations' (Robson, 2011; 17) and for my study, is more concerned with the 'depth and intensity of findings rather than breadth' (Gray, 2009: 202). The 'how?' and 'why?' questions I am intending to ask throughout the research link to the qualitative approach as professionalism in general is 'a social construction in the way that it is identified, perceived and evoked by relationships and situations' (Robson, 2011: 25). In order to gain a greater understanding of a phenomenon such as FE teacher professionalism, 'deeper social reality needs qualitative enquiry' (Gray, 2009: 168): in this study, enquiry which supports the exploration of social behaviour, distribution of power and the influence of social structures (Harrington, 2005). Additionally, an indicative feature of qualitative research is the use of open response questionnaires, interviews and focus groups to account for, and explore voices, in the respective field. These methods support the assumptions of a qualitative approach as they act as instruments to interpret human experience, inductively through their lived worlds (Lovat, 2013: Robson, 2011). By adopting these methods for this research, this

reinforces the aims of the research; responses become ‘talk as data’ and consequentially in this study provides ‘data beyond talk’ (Flick, 2014: 43-44).

Drawing from the constructivist paradigm, the approaches which are associated with it lend themselves well to the studies (Table 4). Research which takes place in natural settings/the workplace and involve human behaviour, which is recorded through dialogue and narratives, are indicators of some of the unique characteristics of qualitative studies (Cresswell, 1994). In addition to this, qualitative studies support the view that there are multiple realities from the researched and researcher’s perspective; this in itself is highly attractive to this study, as defining FE teacher professionalism is tenuous in itself (Guba and Lincoln, 1994). With data being collected in stages, through a pilot questionnaire, exploratory questionnaire, focus groups and, interviews, qualitative methods allow for data collection instruments to be developed by reflexive accounting in order to harvest the most useful data using an interpretative approach. It is for these reasons a solely quantitative approach would not reflect the aims of the study or allow for effective interpretation or inductive reasoning (Cresswell, 1994).

Another key indicator of a qualitative approach is inductive logic; this method allows researchers to explore data and develop theory (Gray, 2009; Cresswell, 1994). This approach is flexible and has the capacity to encompass more than one theoretical stance and method, as it allows the researcher to ask questions of the data and look for patterns and progressively form structured arguments. This is beneficial as it is recognised from the literature review that the concept of FE teacher professionalism is largely unclear, and is multi-faceted and complex; in utilising interpretative methods, and working inductively with the data allows the researcher to treat the data as theory in development rather than looking for a final answer. Acknowledging this, Murphy (2013: 6) observes that for educational researchers the abundance of theories and perspectives emanate from a wide range of disciplines which 'may perplex educational researchers as it involves not belonging to one particular discipline'. Abbott (2001: 6) provides reassurance that within the social sciences this is an accepted ‘norm’ as sociology ‘has become a discipline of

many topics – always acquiring them… [and] irremediably interstitial'. Currently, the concept of FE teacher professionalism appears to be drawing from a range of perspectives and not committed to one perspective alone. Foucault's (1980) discussions on the constraints of the disciplines within social science, as restricting 'the possibilities of thought' (Ball, 2003: 69), serve to support justifications for adopting disciplines which fit the varied contexts of FE teacher professionalism. Metaphorically, Denzin and Lincoln (2008: 7) liken this to the researcher being a quilt maker, 'the quilter stitches, edits, and puts slices of reality together. This process creates and brings psychological and emotional unity – a pattern – to an interpretive experience'.

FE teacher professionalism is much wider than the immediate context it sits within; the reality of it is complex, providing justification for using a qualitative approach. By taking this exploratory, interpretive and inductive approach fulfils my objectives as a researcher; to explore the landscape of teacher professionalism, interpret the 'voices' within the sector, and determine if there are any binding principles of teacher professionalism. Although, care must be taken to ensure that the voices are representational and not just 'cherry picked' to enhance the research. This research is about people, for people, involving people; their voices are the most important aspect of the research, to gain an understanding of a phenomenon that is at its early stages and to provide a 'voice' for teachers who feel unheard.

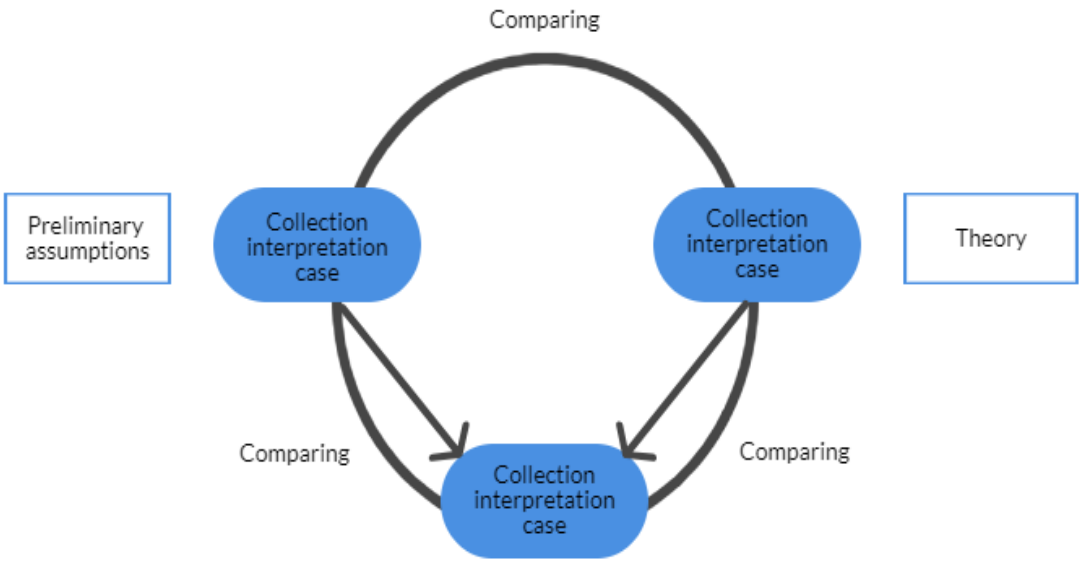


Figure 1. - Circular Model of the Research Process (Flick, 2014 based on Glaser and Strauss, 1967).

3.3.1 The Case Study

The use of a case study is a recognisable feature of qualitative research, which not only aims to put the research phenomenon into context but also provides focus and allows for future transferable insights (Yin, 2009). A case study allows for the exploration of the phenomena, a phenomena where 'relationships may be ambiguous or uncertain' (Gray, 2009: 247); in this case how FE teacher professionalism is defined, interpreted and adopted. It also supports strategies of enquiry that seek to inductively explain phenomena. I was drawn to using a case study due to the opportunities it generated in providing multiple perspectives from a variety of people, such as the voices of: FE teachers who studied and/or worked at the site, FE teachers who worked at other FE providers, FE managers from the case study site, FE media representatives for the case study site, parents of FE students, and FE students who studied at the case study site. This was alongside my own personal accounts from working at the case study site, as well as within other FE providers concurrently for ten years in various teaching and managerial roles. The possibilities of gathering these multiple perspectives, through the use of a case study, and being able to contrast them with each other, was highly attractive and beneficial due to notions of FE teacher professionalism being complex and unclear after scoping the literature.

As I am seeking many views, and an authentic perspective on FE teacher professionalism, polyvocality is an important aspect of this research (Flick, 2014; Cresswell, 1994). Gray (2009: 169) suggests this builds up ‘a rich and detailed understanding of a context’ and supports the desire to find deep and meaningful narratives which tell an insightful story. I believe that in using a case study this will provide the data which is authentic, and is the most appropriate method to use for exploring FE teacher professionalism. This is further supported by Hancké (2009: 61), who argues that case studies:

> Offer detailed insights into mechanisms, motives of actors, and constraints they face at particular moments which no other method -

> statistics, experiment, biographies, or even more systematic comparative analysis - can offer.

The case study site chosen is to be known as Fairview. It is a Northern FE college in the UK which typifies the provision across the sector. Typicality is identified through the case study site offering publicly funded, academic and vocational education and training to a diverse range of students aged from 16 upwards; this education and training is employer led and targeted in order to provide skills and preparation for employment (AoC, 2018; DBIS, 2016). Another aspect of typicality in the case study site relates to the workforce: they are of mixed ages, varying contract types and hold varied professional qualifications. Also, from my working with other FE providers, the case study site does not appear to have any atypical influence over FE teacher professionalism, due to observing the same issues regarding FE teacher professionalism in other PCET providers.

Fairview has multiple sites and provides compulsory and adult education at vocational and academic levels, sitting in an area which is classed as of high deprivation. Fairview has many different types of staff working across the provisions, and was also my place of work for ten years. This diverse network of staff working across the organisation made it an attractive choice for undertaking research. The literature suggests that FE teachers lack 'voice' in key debates and struggle with their professional identities, and by undertaking a case study, this supports the approach of exploring and seeking to understand FE teacher identities and their professionalism. Additionally, using a case study, provides a foundation to explore strategies which are of value to myself, other teachers, and those that come into contact with FE teachers.

In using Fairview as the primary area for research, it provided me with a rich source of data and made it an obvious choice for the research. As well as being convenient and relevant, due to being employed there, it provided me with greater access, I already had an in-depth familiarity with Fairview which sped up the administration and access processes. As an 'insider' I possessed prior knowledge too of what was being said in Fairview, and in other FE providers from partnership working across several other FE organisations; this

is generally homogenous, so minimised the need for more than one case study. Also, for further robustness the individual focus group participants shared their experiences from working at nine separate providers, teaching various subjects, and holding varying lengths of service (Appendix III/IV).

Finally, as a part- time researcher, it must be acknowledged that time is very valuable and in short supply. Gray (2009: 91) supports the use of case studies for part time researchers, suggesting that 'being internal to an organisation means that you often have a clearer understanding of the issues... working internally is often beneficial because you have easier access to resources'. This is a concept I can identify with as a full time educator who is short on time, but seeks authenticity and trustworthiness in the study.

Initially, another institution was invited to take part in the research; a recommended partner employer of my organisation. This was to facilitate a comparative analysis of responses between two similar providers. The partner employer, although initially interested, withdrew from communications and left the research at a standstill for several months, so it was decided that the research would progress using one case study; no indication was provided for the end of communications between myself and the partner employer. This did not affect the case study quality as the extensive work I have undertaken in various roles and partnership working as a lecturer, coach, enhancement lead and observer, provided me with the reassurance that the discourse on FE teacher professionalism had a widespread commonality in the FE sector; in that FE teacher professionalism and identity was a confusing concept. Additionally, the sample chosen taught across several other providers and sectors which added another layer of depth to the narratives.

For the main data collection, other strategies of enquiry were excluded mainly due to their positivistic and deductive methods; also they failed to provide strong opportunities in several key areas which were important to the study such as 'identifying new variables, dealing with complex causal relations, and devising and testing historical explanations' (Bennett, 2007: 46). One of the greatest benefits of using a case study is the ability to be able to use more than one method for data collection, which develops and builds upon the previous

method/s and data in order to elicit rich data. Using a singular method or methods which may not be complementary such as questionnaires, tests, assessments, and experiments would not provide a vehicle for gaining useful data in this type of qualitative research; evidence of this can be seen in the move away from a single questionnaire after the pilot study. Tests, assessments, and experiments do not align with the aims of the research of viewing and exploring a phenomenon through the eyes of those within it based on their experiences. The methods dismissed are more aligned with gathering statistical evidence, which virtually eliminates personalised data: this is not an approach that I wish to take. Within the study there are ethnographic aspects which have been utilised such as, 'reporting of multiple perspectives, description, understanding and explanation of a specific situation [and providing] perceptions and views of participants' (Cohen et al., 2011: 128). Additionally, ethnographic characteristics including, 'honesty, authenticity… exploration and rich reporting of a specific context' (Cohen et al., 2011: 128) are complementary to the research, and support in creating a rich picture of FE teacher professionalism.

On a final note, the disadvantages of using a single case study must be reviewed. Being able to balance case study choices against convenience and relevance for the intended investigations, can lead to methodological dilemmas; the main ones being reliability and the ability to generalise (Cohen et al., 2011; O'Leary, 2007). For these issues I turn to the arguments which have been well documented between the quantitative and qualitative paradigms. In simple terms, the quantitative paradigm ideal is objective, measurable, supposedly value free, and can be tested for the truth through replication of studies, whereas the qualitative paradigm is subjective, more difficult to measure, value laden, and although replication can be carried out there may be multiple truths (Cresswell, 1994). For these reasons single case studies, which adopt a solely qualitative approach, may be subject to a greater deal of scrutiny in terms of proving their reliability and validity (Cohen et al., 2011; Robson, 2011).

As a qualitative researcher, it is important that it is made clear what has been done to support reliability and validity. O'Leary (2007) asks the qualitative researcher to focus upon indicators of good research, rather than become embroiled in the standardised measures for reliability and validity which are applied to quantitative research. The indicators consist of ensuring that positioning is made clear and transparent, and that methodological consistency is upheld through several means such as dependability, capturing authenticity, applicability, generalisability, transferability, accountability and auditability. These means should be consistent to support reliability and validity, and acknowledge that methods used are dependable and support trustworthiness. In promoting dependability, O'Leary (2007: 60) recognises that:

> Dependability assumes that what is being studied may not be reliable, consistent, or standard – or that capturing what is seen as standard may not be possible… It is a lot easier to look for consistency in the laboratory than it is in society… Dependability indicates quality assurance through methodological protocols that are designed and developed in a manner that is consistent, logical, systematic, well-documented, and designed to account for research subjectivities.

Throughout this research a concerted effort has been made to be transparent on researcher positioning and evidence rigour in the methodological approach chosen and the methods used. It is accepted that traditional views of using a single case study may attract criticism based upon assumptions that only one set of voices will be heard in the data therefore reducing reliability, validity and generalisability (Robson, 2011; Gray, 2009; Hancké, 2009). To address this, clear strategies have been developed to ensure that the single case study includes the voices of those outside of the case study site and a focus on researcher trustworthiness has been reinforced.

3.3.2 Sampling Strategy

Gaining authentic insights into FE teacher professionalism is a key aim of the researcher to ensure that FE teacher voices are heard and form part of the developing subject specific discourse. In selecting a purposive sample, Patton (2015: 46) argues that those who are studied are chosen because they are 'information rich and illuminative… they offer useful manifestations of the phenomenon of interest; sampling, then, is aimed at insight about the

phenomenon'. By purposively selecting participants, continuously evaluating their contributions, and refining the sample to elicit authentic and useful data, this provides opportunities for the researcher to respond meaningfully to the research aims (Flick, 2014 based on Altheide and Johnson, 1998) (Table 6). As previously discussed, reflexive accounting facilitates flexibility within the research to follow the data and make adjustments whilst the research is in situ; a method particularly useful as the data builds and provides multiple areas of interest to follow. Also, as an insider to the research, it is noteworthy that all research participants were known to me in my capacity as an FE teacher and coach at the case study site. During data collection, the reflexive methods employed supported continuous theory building and the development of new insights, with the sample placed at the heart of the studies (fig. 1). The reflexive approach consisted of evaluating and reviewing the sample at each stage of the data collection and was particularly important after each of the questionnaire stages, where the sample was refined in order to facilitate the production of the most authentic and subject specific data for the study. The research process plan below reflects this method of being reflexive and evaluative at every stage and analysis (fig. 2).

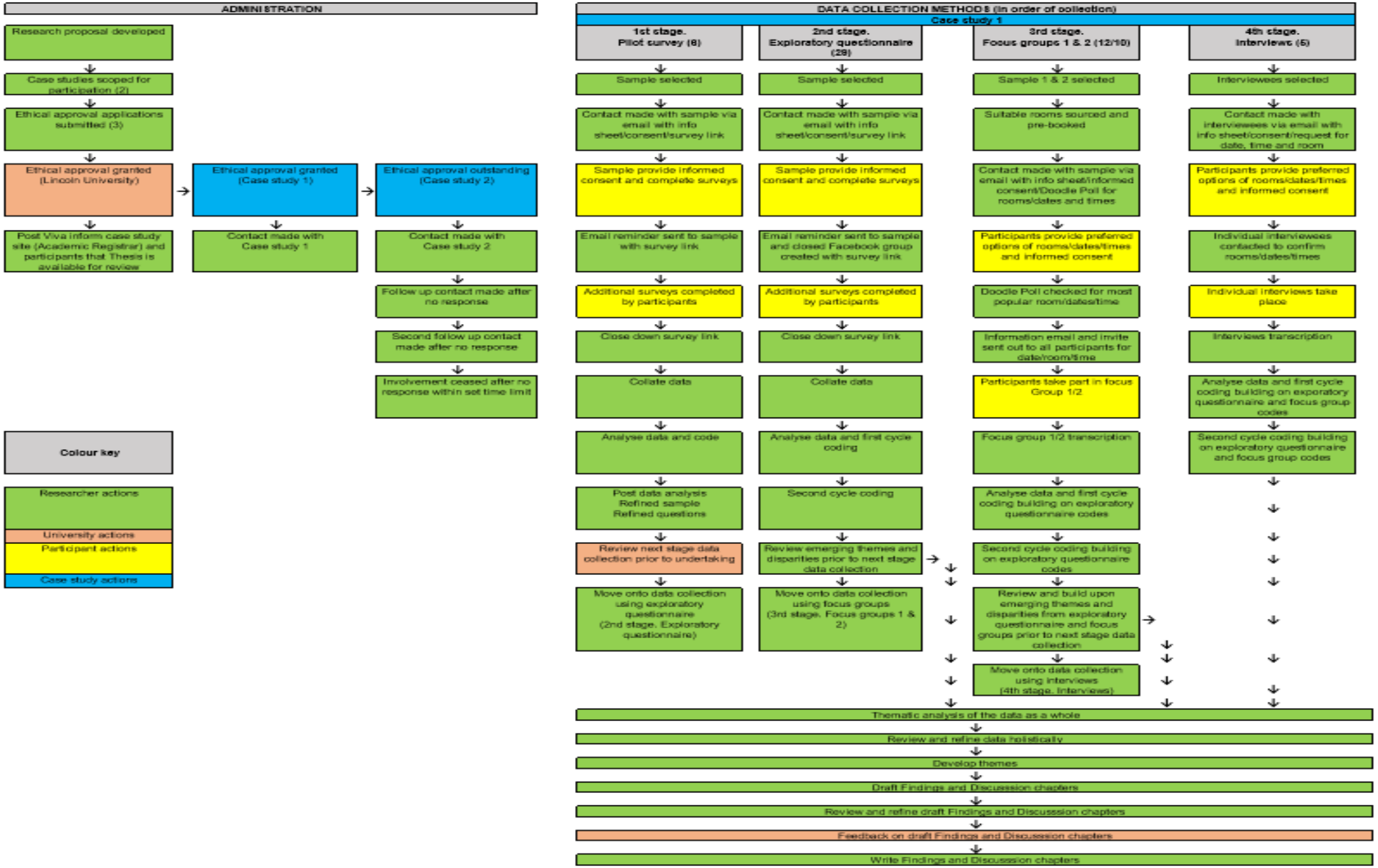


Figure 2 – Research process plan (also available electronically).

For the first stage of the research (pilot study), participants were chosen based upon their direct relationships with the FE sector and categorised into homogenous groups: FE teachers (QTs), trainee teachers/newly qualified teachers (NQTs), parents/guardians of FE students, and FE students (Appendix III). The intended aim of including a cross section of participants, with different associations within the sector, was to ensure that a variety of voices were heard, and elicit a snapshot of opinions and ideas regarding FE and the teachers that work within it. Additionally, the rationale for homogenous groups was to determine if there were commonalities or recurring themes within the individual groups' data, and to identify if there were any disparities between data in the individual groups. All participants either worked, studied, or knew individuals that studied at the case study site, with some NQTs carrying out their teacher training part time at the case study site, but working full time for other FE providers. Due to the anonymity of the questionnaire the ratio of participants who participated from other FE providers could not be determined but their status of trainee teachers/NQTs indicates that not all participants derive solely from the case study site. This extended the breadth of the data beyond the case study site, and provided additional cross institutional data.

The pilot study findings led to the sample being reviewed, mainly to include more participants in each of the categories for the next stage for data building, and also to invite participants with other roles within FE (fig. 2). The sample increased for the exploratory questionnaire to include FE Managers and FE media representatives; this was in response to themes within the literature of media involvement in how FE teachers are portrayed, and also to include managerial perspectives of the sector on FE teacher professionalism (Appendix III). The FE managers who were invited had a very low teaching commitment and therefore less contact time with students, i.e. more administrative tasks; I was interested to see if this impacted on their perceptions of the sector and the teachers that work within it. Again, the anonymity of the questionnaire does not allow identification of participants from other FE providers, but four trainee teachers/NQTs responded which indicates there is a likelihood that this included some from other FE providers.

The response rate for the exploratory questionnaire was high in terms of QTs, trainee teachers/NQTs and FE media representatives (5 per cent). Within these homogenous groups there were rich sources of data, mainly from the QTs and trainee teachers/NQTs; these formed a cohesive narrative indicating oppression, identity issues, and sector ambiguity. The other participant categories served to support these narratives in their responses, yet also perceiving FE teachers in a very positive light which was contrary to what the QTs and trainee teachers/NQTs were indicating in the data. Although what the other categories of respondents had to contribute was of interest regarding the positive status of FE teachers, their data did not offer any insider, or illuminating perspectives on professional identity which could be explored more deeply in order to meet with the research aims.

As a reflexive researcher, the pilot and exploratory questionnaire pointed me in the direction of using solely QTs and NQTs for the remaining data collection in the form of focus groups and interviews (fig. 2). These two groups' experiences were already starting to provide insightful, strong, realistic voices on their definitions, orientations and experiences of FE teacher professionalism within the sector. Their input was worthy of further exploration, also as an insider, it was believed that these particular participants were best placed to understand and answer the research questions authentically. Another beneficial aspect of utilising these two particular groups of participants relates to their subject currency. The QTs and NQTs fulfil substantive sector relevance criteria, in that they are aware of the current policy, regulation and issues within FE as part of their daily roles (Patton, 2015: Morse, 1998). Additionally, as part of regulation at the time, their status was representative of FE teachers; FE teachers were either qualified or undergoing ITT to fulfil compulsory professional requirements. On a final note, in selecting QTs and NQTs for the remainder of the data collection, they align with Morse's (1998) criteria (Table 5) of being 'good informant[s]' for providing meaningful data and have been chosen for depth of what they can contribute to the research as opposed to width; width of the study is covered in part by some of the NQTs being employed at other providers whilst completing their part time Initial Teacher Training (ITT) at the case study site.

Participants should…
Have the necessary knowledge and experience of the issue or object at their disposal for answering the questions
Have the capability to reflect and articulate
Have the time to be asked and participate
Be ready to participate in the study
Be able to fulfil **all** of the criteria above

Table 5. – Criteria of a good informant (Morse, 1998) adapted from Flick (2014: 176).

The rich seams of data which were provided during the two consecutive questionnaires, steered the methods used for data collection towards focus groups and interviews rather than continuing to use questionnaires. The questionnaires acted as a robust starting point to determine participant selection and supported a move to using methods which allowed the participants to openly discuss, elaborate and contextualise their contributions in their respective focus groups (NQTs and QTs), and finally during individual interviews. A cohort of part time NQTs initially volunteered, and then subsequently were invited, to take part in a self-managed focus group after completing an ITT module on Professionalism in Practice. These participants were chosen for their currency in professional standards in teaching, and current issues in the sector linked to being newly qualified. They also provided elements of breadth to the data as nine of the participants were employed at other FE providers, therefore offering a wider perspective of the phenomenon. The second focus group were QTs who were chosen for their extensive experience of working in the sector through an array of changes to professional standards. The QTs who took part were part of a team where the majority of staff had worked within that teaching team for five years or more. All of them had experienced the cycle of professionalisation, de-professionalisation, and at the time, the relatively new concept of re-professionalisation, which included dual/tripartite professionalism. Their contribution provided another lens in which to view FE teacher professionalism through.

3.4.0 Positionality and Insider Research

Within qualitative studies, ethical dilemmas appear to present themselves more frequently due to the inductive and subjective approaches to research (Flick, 2014; Cresswell, 1994). Within my own strategies for enquiry one of the greatest considerations is my positionality as an 'insider' researcher; this includes my subjectivity based on personal values and beliefs, and balances of power relations between myself and the participants. McWilliam and Tann (2010) argue that one's positionality can act as an instigator for research; a concept which I can identify with regarding teacher professionalism in FE. The increasing angst I have felt trying to identify as a professional FE teacher over a number of years is expressed by Ball (2003: 72); 'we know ourselves and relate to others from where we belong, or sometimes out of a sense of not belonging, of feeling out of place'. These feelings of being *'out of place'* have guided me to seek clarity on FE teacher professional identity and how normative accounts of FE teacher professionalism have been derived. This has led to undertaking the research in this specific area within the remit of Professional PhD practitioner research.

3.4.1 Reflexivity

Berger (2015: 219) advocates reflexivity as a 'major strategy for quality control in qualitative research'. My own reflexivity from working in FE led me to undertake the research into FE teacher professionalism and aligns with Berger's view on reflexivity, which suggests that the researcher and the knowledge they produce cannot be easily separated. Additionally, I can identify strongly with Mauther and Doucet's (2003: 419) argument that by 'situating ourselves socially and emotionally in relation to respondents is an important element of reflexivity', and was considered normal practice for myself whilst undertaking research. By being continually reflexive and evaluating my beliefs, ideas, and opinions I am undertaking continuous self-appraisal throughout the research process and acknowledging the effect of my position within the studies; this is part of the endeavour to reinforce my trustworthiness (Cutcliffe, 2003). Support for this is evidenced in the work of O'Leary (2007: 61) who argues that being authentic allows for expansion of truths, and adds rigour to studies and weight in conclusions being, 'justified,

credible, and trustworthy'. One of my key positions is that I believe that FE teachers should adhere to a set of professional standards and entry requirements. This has arisen from undertaking ITT during a period of professionalisation and de-professionalisation by the government, and through teaching the PGCE for a number of years. Teaching the professionalism module to ITT students raised my critical awareness of the professional status of FE teachers and the relations I have within it (Estrella, 1999). This is in addition to the many changes I have been through whilst working as a FE teacher, which have had a profound effect on how I view my professional identity and has been acknowledged as part of the self-appraisal process.

Throughout this research I have maintained a consistent awareness of the lens I am looking through, and ensured that I have acknowledged my position as a FE teaching professional; it is recognised that my experiences have ensured that I am part of the data. By being critically reflexive I am using my experiences working as an FE teacher to encourage the participants to also critically reflect on their professional identities and practice; raising their critical awareness of their own values and beliefs revolving around their professional identities. As an insider researcher, I have adopted this approach through the use of first person language in some sections and by taking care to outline any potential areas of bias I may have, and the strategies I have put in place to mitigate them. As part of being reflexive I have included a brief synopsis below of my career from 2005-2019 and a short discussion on my evolving beliefs and values from working in FE. This is to illustrate the lens in which I am viewing the research, and show researcher credibility, and also trustworthiness in the research process and data analysis (Berger, 2015). Additionally, this information is provided with the aims of contextualising and rationalising my positionality as an insider undertaking a Professional PhD.

3.4.2 Contextual underpinning of being an insider

I have worked in FE since 2005, initially for third sector providers of vocational training and English and Maths as a tutor until 2009. I then moved onto Fairview as a tutor for English, and also became a teaching and learning coach; this involved supporting staff to develop their teaching practices and

carrying out observations. I also delivered training to FE teaching staff on a variety of subjects which supported them to enhance the learning experiences of their students and develop innovative teaching methods. In 2015 I was made a programme leader for English and also seconded into an interim role as a Quality Manager for teaching, learning and assessment. Whilst carrying out the interim role I also taught in HE as a programme leader for the In-Service PGCE Year 1 and 2. I left Fairview in 2018 to pursue a career supporting academic staff to develop their teaching practices and my most recent role was based at a university as a Teaching Enhancement Officer.

One of the greatest influences on me personally occurred whilst carrying out the coaching and PGCE programme leader roles. Through reflective accounting I started noticing that there were differing perspectives on professionalism arising from the staff and PGCE students I worked with and taught, and was increasingly puzzled by differing perceptions of teacher professionalism and how they were being enacted by teaching staff. This was particularly evident with PGCE students when I was teaching the professionalism module, and was still evident in my role as a Teaching Enhancement Officer despite working for a different provider whose sole provision is HE. Between 2004 and 2014 there was a government focus upon professionalising, de-professionalising and re-professionalising FE teachers and during the intense period of professionalisation in 2007 I was undertaking a PGCE myself. This had a substantial impact on how I viewed myself and other FE teachers as I was situated in the midst of radical changes to FE teacher professionalism, for which in the most part I initially agreed with and then strongly opposed. I agreed with the raft of changes made in 2004 where FE teachers were forced into mandatory professional membership of the IfL and having to undertake professional formation. I could not see why this would be an issue as I perceived this to be a quality indicator of FE teachers and associated it with other professions and their professional requirements such as doctors and lawyers. For me, professional regulation instilled trust and credibility between peers, and I perceived that it offered reassurance to the public.

As soon as the regulations were implemented and I had completed my PGCE, I joined the IfL and achieved QTLS through professional formation. After the revocation of the professional regulations in 2012, I was bitterly disappointed with what I viewed to be complete de-professionalisation of FE teachers, I struggled with having to communicate to my PGCE students that qualifications and professional membership were no longer a requirement of being classed as a professional FE teacher. I became further disillusioned that no FE Guild was to be created and that the FE organisations would individually be responsible for setting their own parameters for FE teacher professionalism. My observations from working across a number of providers post de-regulation evidenced that there was no consistent set of professional standards for FE teachers, and in some cases this was being utilised to save money by recruiting unqualified FE teachers as well as restricting academic growth and promotion through the restriction of funding for professional development of teaching staff.

My experience of trying to develop myself academically, post de-regulation, mirrored what I was seeing in other providers. All financial and resource support for studies which were not part of the 'in-house', unaccredited, organisational offer were promptly declined with the explanation given that there were no longer formal requirements for qualifications for FE teachers. During one of the PGCE sessions I taught, a number of the students fed back that they were annoyed that they had started the PGCE and it was no longer a requirement to work in FE; this now meant they had additional studies and debt in order to gain a qualification that had no influence over their employment status or opportunities. As I strived to undertake unsupported post graduate studies I empathised with the situation which had arisen from policy change, this was in addition to the removal of mandatory professional membership; something I believed strongly in and continue to do so. It is evident from this brief synopsis that I am an insider, and as a reflexive researcher I acknowledge my position within the research and outline the benefits of this in the discussion below.

3.4.3 Advantages and Disadvantages of Being an Insider

Gray (2009) notes that practical 'insider' research is not unusual as the researcher seeks to explore issues or questions they have regarding the provision they work within, and supports its use due to the researcher's contextual understanding of the organisation and research problem; this is in addition to the practicality of having the data on your doorstep. As an 'insider' I possess credibility as I am already working in, alongside researching, the context and have a 'common-sense view' of what is going on within the organisation (Gray, 2009: 382). Through studying the familiar I have avoided what Berger (2015) identifies as the 'trap' associated with researching the unfamiliar, such as: struggling with research questions which the participants can relate to, a lack of awareness of specialist subject related language and implied meanings, and a lack of subject experience and genuine interest in the research area. Additionally, it is apparent that I have more than one identity; I am not just a researcher or a teacher; firstly I was an FE teacher and then a HE teacher. These multiple identities help me to understand the context and study participants, as it is clear that I am positioned inside the research. It is evident that I feel strongly about teacher professionalism; Murphy (2013: 9) observes that 'sources of academic identity [can have] multiple interpretations' and this allows me to explore notions of FE teacher identity from 'both the external and internal world... critically reflecting on [my] own beliefs and values' (Lovat, 2013: 72). My extensive knowledge in post compulsory education and professionalism therefore allows me to approach data analysis with an understanding of the historical and contextual underpinnings of FE teacher professionalism during a particularly fractious period.

In my previous role as an FE teacher, I was 'part of the group under study' (Berger, 2015: 222) and this meant that I was in the position of 'simultaneously being an onlooker in the stalls and a member of the cast' (Shaw, 1996: 10). As a researcher this is advantageous as I am an insider with easy access and prior knowledge. This is in addition to possessing knowledge of the participants, having credibility amongst peers, and existing rapport and empathy with the issues being faced by the participants. Our shared experiences established a foundation for belief from the participants in that

their story will be understood and told representatively (Padgett, 2008; Kacen and Chaitin, 2006). This is advantageous, as for an outsider this may take a long time to be able to understand the organisation and its workings, and place the data within the context it has derived from.

Previous teaching roles meant that I was well informed of the issues surrounding FE teacher professionalism and its regulation, alongside how professionalism is interpreted within an FE context. Having this insight and lived experience enhanced my credibility with participants and provided me with easy access to their views, ideas and opinions; their struggle regarding FE teacher professionalism was also my struggle. Berger (2015: 225) associates this with 'disclosure of more personal and 'deep' stories' as opposed to the 'more 'professional' distanced'. From an outsider perspective it would be easy to view their stories on struggles with professionalism and status with 'judging lenses' (Berger, 2015: 228), but because of my position, their responses were authentic; I understood their perspectives as I have personally experienced difficulties with professional status myself (Fontes, 1998). Indicative of this was the ease in which participants came forward and took part in the research; they wanted to get their stories across through a researcher who knew and empathised with being a teacher in FE. In relation to this, Berger (2015: 223) talks of a sense of 'comfort' between participants and the researcher. In these studies, participant and researcher comfort was evident through the shared experiences of us being FE teachers, and subsequently rapport naturally occurred. During the focus groups, leaving the participants to talk amongst themselves was a sound judgement as they provided a rich source of data. An outsider may not have necessarily known that this would be the best way to elicit information from a set of participants, by knowing your audience, but by stepping out of the focus group I also avoided researcher bias or accidentally imposing my own beliefs. The interviews were unstructured also to avoid this; this also minimised any power relationships that may have occurred.

For data analysis, being an insider has been beneficial for coding and identifying themes, insofar as having an in depth knowledge of 'disguised and

subtle expression of themes' (Berger, 2015: 228), which may not have been immediately noticeable to an outsider. This was apparent when participants were indirectly identifying characteristics of Impostor Syndrome (Clance and Imes, 1978) when discussing their status and professional standing. An outsider may have missed these verbal 'clues' (Berger, 2015: 228) from the dialogue due to their different knowledge base and points of reference. In processing and analysing the data, as Berger (2015: 223) suggests, I was 'sensitized to certain dimensions of the data'. This was evident during the discussions surrounding professional bodies and regulation, as teacher professionalism is a specialist area which I taught and I have been through the process of formal professionalisation and then de-professionalisation, with re-professionalisation following. The discomfort felt by the participants regarding them being situated in a professional vacuum, was also felt by myself, and I could identify and empathise with their predicaments regarding their professional status.

As advantageous as 'insider' research is, there are also many difficulties which means that all aspects have to be considered carefully. Care must be taken to acknowledge that prior information of the people and their contexts does not influence the research outcomes; researcher reflexivity is key. Positionality and personal interests must be declared at the start of the research and throughout the research process to all parties concerned in addition to making connections explicit throughout the Thesis. Ethically, there may also be issues with power relations and confidentiality as an insider so care must be taken to reduce likely conflicts and reassure participants and their organisations that their information is protected and anonymous during and post research (Robson, 2011). To address these common issues, prior to gaining ethical approval from The University of Lincoln, ethical approval was sought and gained from the case study organisation prior to data collection taking place. It was made clear that I would be undertaking data collection within the organisation that I worked for and strategies to reinforce trustworthiness were outlined. Also, participants were fully informed of the purpose of the study and the part they would play in it through the provision of participant information sheets, in addition to being provided with information as to why I was

undertaking the research. This allowed them time to go away and decide if they wanted to take part and reduced any pressure to commit themselves at the time of asking.

Generally, as an insider there are some general issues associated with being close to the subject that is being investigated, and according to literature they may have an impact on the studies. Kacen and Chaitin (2006: 220) indicate that there are three main bias features involving the position of the researcher:

> First, they can affect access to the 'field' because respondents may be more willing to share their experiences with a researcher whom they perceive as sympathetic to their situation (De Tona, 2006), and the researcher may be more knowledgeable about potentially helpful and informative resources.
>
> Second, they may shape the nature of researcher–researched relationship, which, in turn, affects the information that participants are willing to share…
>
> Finally, the worldview and background of the researcher affects the way in which he or she constructs the world, uses language, poses questions, and chooses the lens for filtering the information gathered from participants and making meaning of it, and thus may shape the findings and conclusions of the study.

If the first issue is considered, then my connection to the participants' situations and their contexts is of benefit to the research as my knowledge and empathy serve to elicit maximum information from the participants. It is also of note that despite the participants all having a common connection of either working or study at the case study site, they had external experiences as some of the PGCE students worked for nine other FE providers outside of the case study which added a richness to the data (Appendix III).

The second issue of power relationships and participant hesitancy in sharing information was considered in depth through reflexive accounting. This led me to think about my own reactions to the participants and their answers which is why apart from the interviews, I was not present for the questionnaires and focus groups. Additionally, the questionnaires were entirely anonymous and there was minimal dialogue in the interviews from me apart from seeking clarification on some statements. I strove to maintain my awareness of myself as part of the research. Berger (2015: 221) argues that this

> Enhances the quality of the research by allowing researchers to ponder the ways in which who they are may both assist and hinder the process of co-constructing meanings (Lietz et al., 2006), frees them to handle and present the data better, and consider its complex meanings and contribution to the understanding of social phenomena and of the process involved in knowledge production.

The third issue of researcher values and beliefs, and their influence on data analysis and interpretation, was tackled through being open and transparent with all stakeholders involved in the research utilising the method of self supervision (Berger, 2015). A key feature of keeping my biases in check, through self-supervision, was to ensure there was triangulation of the data and, in addition to my doctoral supervision team, a critical friend was adopted to oversee the research. Additionally, I acknowledged my beliefs regarding mandatory professional membership for FE teachers; this is something I feel strongly about and have made this clear throughout the study. During data analysis I put myself in the position of the few participants who felt that professional membership did not influence status and looked in the literature to explain why they felt this way, thus avoiding transposing my own beliefs about this particular area during analysis. I also looked inwardly to identify why I had strong feelings regarding FE teachers belonging to a professional body, and concluded that I believe professional credibility is linked to accountability through professional membership. I believe teaching is an important job and teachers should be qualified and knowledgeable. I have been part of constant policy and regulation change associated with FE teacher professionalism over the last fifteen years, whilst training to be a teacher and working within the sector; this has shaped my perspective on the concept.

To conclude, in discussing how concepts are defined, Gray (2009: 260) warns that there is a danger that 'the researcher will base this, [the concept of professionalism in FE], on his or her personal impressions'; this could then have an impact on the validity of the findings. In this qualitative study, the researcher credibility and trustworthiness serves to reinforce reliability and validity in conjunction with triangulation of the data. Reflexive accounting and self-supervision are methods which have been adopted as part of the strategy to maintain trustworthiness, as it is acknowledged that in qualitative research

reliability and validity can be more difficult to evidence compared to quantitative methods due to the 'fuzziness' of the type of data qualitative studies tend to collect (Flick, 2014: 486).

3.4.4 Reinforcing Trustworthiness

As previously discussed, in qualitative studies it is arguable that complete reliability is more difficult to achieve due to the nature of the fuzzy data collected. In this study validity is reinforced through the adoption of Altheide and Johnson's (1998) reflexive accounting; validity is located in the 'process of research and the different relationships at work in it' (Flick, 2014: 486). In this research, reliability and validity are located in the commitment to Altheide and Johnson's steps supported through reflexive accounting (Table 6). Through the literature review, engagement with policy, anecdotal evidence, and self-auditing I have explored the relationships between what is observed and the contexts in which the observations are made (Step 1). One of the methods I have used to do this is through defining the concept of professionalism in general at the start of research, through the use of a combined models of professionalism framework based upon the work of well-regarded authors on professionalism: Freidson (2004), Hoyle (1972) and Greenwood (1957) (Table 1). By defining a collective, normative account of professionalism, this then reduces personal bias towards the concept of FE teacher professionalism. I have also been open and transparent in all aspects of the research process and in the narrative, of my position and stance as an insider to the research (Step 2). For Step 3 I have rationalised and utilised my own point of view and the perspectives of the participants in order to interpret the data, and include the voices of those that feel unheard amongst the discourse of FE teacher professionalism. I have also considered the audience of this work (FE teachers, ITT teaching staff, professional bodies), who I hope to engage in debate and provide an understanding as to how FE teachers view their professional identities (Step 4). Finally, I have used the first person in sections of the narrative and direct, unedited quotes to support authenticity for the reader, and promote a connection between the reader and the written word (Step 5).

Steps	Process
1	The relationship between what is observed (behaviors, rituals, meanings) and the larger cultural, historical, and organizational contexts within which the observations are made (the substance);
2	The relationship between the observer, the observed, and the setting (the observer);
3	The issue of perspective or point of view (whether the observer's or the members) used to render an interpretation of the ethnographic data (the interpretation);
4	The role of the reader in the final product (the audience);
5	The issue of representational, rhetorical, or authorial style used by the author(s) to render the description and/or interpretation (the style)

Table 6. – Reflexive accounting process for reinforcing validity (Flick, 2014; 486 based on Altheide and Johnson, 1998: 291-292).

When researching using a qualitative approach, replication of the studies are traditionally associated with reliability as a method of validation and testing the truth, and although methods can easily be replicated for this particular study there is no guarantee that the results will be the same if it is carried out, and if this would be beneficial in any way. Goetz and LeCompte (1984), cited in Clonts, 1992: 2) observed that 'no one study can ever be replicated exactly, because human behaviour is not static', and it is acknowledged that this may apply to this research. Flick (2014: 484) suggests that 'research aims at presenting reality, not reproducing it [and] if one starts from this position, the question of validity turns into a different question'; this is where credibility and trustworthiness within the research design and researcher plays a key part. For the main data collection, I do not believe that replicating the studies in another case study site would bring increased reliability as the participants involved were individually employed by over nine FE providers; this, I believe, provides a fair representation of participant views on the subject and adds robustness in the case study, thus enhancing generalisability (Appendix III/IV). Guba and Lincoln (1994) attribute increased reliability to dependability and consistency of results, suggesting that researchers provide a clear rationale and strategy for evidencing their credibility and trustworthiness in both the research design and positionality.

One of the most common methods of assuring reliability and validity is triangulation (Flick, 2014; Gray, 2009). By acknowledging that 'any single

measure of data is fallible' (Clonts, 1992: 7), triangulation is employed as a method to reinforce and substantiate that the research design is robust, and the data is accurate and representative by using more than one means of collection (Chanter, 2009). Additionally, triangulation offers qualitative researchers the opportunity to strengthen the quality of their research by using multiple methods, and increases research trustworthiness through 'further enriching and completing knowledge… towards transgressing the always limited epistemological potential of the individual method' (Flick, 2014: 183).

In this research, data was collected using three methods: a pilot questionnaire initially; an exploratory questionnaire; then focus groups, and subsequently interviews. Using a combined quantitative and qualitative pilot study at the start provided a broad view of the phenomenon under exploration, and allowed the development of methods for the next stage, which were most suitable to capture the information and would be relevant to the research. The pilot study supported me in being reflexive, and demonstrated the need for multiple research methods at it did not produce the type of data which fully reflected the thoughts, ideas and opinions of the participants regarding FE teacher professionalism: it was too directive and the open responses were limited in gaining detailed reflections from participants on their thoughts and feelings regarding professionalism. Reviewing the methods and using more than one method provided opportunities to gather richer, more authentic data, and draws parallels with the literature in that it increases 'scope, depth and consistency… and thus puts findings on a more solid foundation… insights that go beyond the knowledge made possible by one approach' (Flick, 2014: 184).

On a final note, it is pertinent to mention the issues which may arise from triangulation. In using more than one method for data collection, this may produce results which may differ, agree or be significantly inconclusive. In approaching this, Flick (2014: 190) recommends not to question the data but seek 'theoretical explanations of where these differences come from and what this diversity may tell you'. In essence, the strategy to take is that the data is telling a story, and as a researcher, it is important that you use your knowledge and skills to piece it together in the best way possible; this is where positionality

as an insider may be advantageous. Another area which may pose problems lies within using more than one method to collect data; this may elicit data which is irrelevant or not useful. By carrying out a pilot study, this enabled the methods to be developed, as it was determined that the pilot questionnaire and the exploratory questionnaire featured some participants who did not provide data which would contribute meaningfully to the study. The work and data from both questionnaires were then built upon to review and develop the sample, and focus upon a solely qualitative approach for the next two stages of data collection.

3.6.0 Ethical Considerations

Being ethical is a core responsibility of a researcher, and integral to the research process (BERA, 2011). The ethical process should be infused within the research and be maintained as a living process throughout, in the hope that it is accomplished to the point of engaging with it unconsciously (Cohen et al., 2011). For those that oversee research and participate within it, there should be transparency from the researcher and a firm commitment to act responsibly. Any research which involves human participants requires the researcher to place them at the forefront of the research to avoid research dilemmas, and also anticipate for any potential physical or emotional harm which may occur at any stage of the research. To ensure that this has been planned for thoroughly, ethical approval was sought and granted by The University of Lincoln and also by the case study organisation prior to data collection taking place. This adds robustness to the process and ensures that ethical considerations are not thought about in isolation from the researcher perspective only, as other perspectives are sought through the process of ethical approval.

In using human participants for my research it is important to acknowledge that research can become complicated, and may lead to research dilemmas as a result of what is said; therefore to protect my participants several methods were employed to ensure that they felt confident to take part in the research and that they would come to no harm by being involved in it. Research participants were fully informed of my intentions and methods being used

through the provision of a participant information sheet and consent form which provided them with context (Appendix V/VI). Participants were provided with a clear explanation of what the research was about, and their role if they chose to participate in it. These documents provided the participants the opportunity to decline or withdraw from the research within a given time frame and reassured them that anonymity and confidentiality were assured throughout the research through various methods. The documents were sent in advance by email for participants to return completed, or agreed verbally, prior to carrying out any data collection. Additionally, by reading the documents and then taking part in the research, informed consent was given.

From previously teaching English, it was a high priority that participants could engage with the research documentation using clear and simple language. Using non jargonised language is an important aspect of ensuring participant understanding, as researcher language may act to disengage the participants if not used carefully (Flick, 2014; Denzin and Lincoln, 2000). This previous experience as an English teacher provided me with insider knowledge on how to convey meaning clearly for non-specialist audiences; to ensure clarity and understanding for participants, using accessible language. The structure for these documents were taken from the BERA Ethical Guidelines (2011), and the University of Lincoln's Ethical Principles for Conducting Research with Humans and Other Animals (2014). As an insider researcher, it is important to me that participants have confidence in my intentions, and for me to confirm that my intentions are good. All participants are known to me, and there is a possibility that they may reveal more than they would normally about their places of work and practices. By familiarising the research participants with the research aims over a period of time prior to data collection, they have had time to prepare for being involved, and the opportunity to reflect and ask questions or withdraw prior to participating.

The main ethical issues which were identified as pertinent to the study were: researcher bias, an imbalance of power relationships, the location of where the actual data collection takes place, and finally protecting data and keeping confidentiality. It is important to recognise, prepare for, and have strategies

for dealing with these issues from the standpoint as an ethical researcher with foresight rather than wait until issues arise. If the researcher is not fully prepared, then ethical issues may become problematic and have the potential to affect the study as a whole. The ethical issues which have been identified for this particular study will be discussed in greater detail in the following narrative starting with researcher positionality and bias which has the potential to have the biggest detrimental impact on the research.

The personal connection between the researcher and their research cannot be underestimated as this could facilitate bias throughout the research. The research topic is an area that I feel strongly about and have a genuine interest in; I am driven to explore FE teacher professionalism as it featured heavily in my role within FE and is of great interest to me in my current role in teaching enhancement. This is due to working with teachers and academics who are building or reinforcing their professionalism by undertaking either voluntary or mandatory coaching and training. Whilst working with staff and also teaching PGCE students there is an underlying theme of professional identity as we work together to develop and improve their teaching practice. Some staff feel that by engaging with coaching and training it improves their professionalism whereas for others they feel that any development is inconsequential to their professional standing, and are dismissive any perceived benefits to their professional status; I find this attitude particularly challenging. As a result of this, I have acknowledged that I am an 'insider' to the research and have consistently engaged with a critical friend alongside communicating the research progress to peers through conference presentations in order to rationalise my decisions and make use of critical review. Additionally, I have made concerted efforts to engage with several communities of practice to ensure that the research, although of personal interest, is subject to peer review by other audiences by taking small sections of the research which are of social interest and presenting it on a regular basis over the last five years at internal and external conferences.

It is inevitable that this determined focus on a topic I feel strongly about, may have implications on the ability to remain neutral on a topic that is a focus of

my day to day work. Despite this, it can be argued that strong beliefs held on a research topic supports the notion of acting as an agent for change; an aim that forms part of the research outcomes through the provision of recommendations for the future (Cohen et al., 2011: 9). Lovat (2013) argues that within education research it is very difficult to be a value free researcher; we all have an experience of education which shapes and influences our constructs of education as a whole, and those who work within it. However, how we choose to utilise these personal constructs during our own research should not affect or influence participants or interpretation of the research findings; they should serve to guide our research and the justification for carrying out research in the first instance.

Aside from the participants who were educational staff, parents and students involved in the pilot study and exploratory questionnaire may also feel pressured into taking part in the research due to the perceived power relationships between themselves and the researcher, and an unfamiliarity with research practices and the research area. To minimise these issues for these participants, the writing of the participant information sheet and consent form were written in accessible language and the email invitation to take part in the research provided further information on the research; inviting participants to ask questions or contact me if they had any worries. The remaining participants who took part in the focus groups and interviews were either QTs or NQTs. Despite robustly planning to minimise any issues with power imbalances, it must be acknowledged that power relations and hierarchies will inevitably exist within the groupings of participants and it is the responsibility of the researcher to minimise these occurring during data collection to ensure that everyone has a voice. As an extra precaution, to ensure that the pilot questionnaire was fit for purpose, an experienced, qualified FE teacher was asked to test the instrument and feedback any issues with questions or functionality; no issues were identified.

To minimise any power relationships within the focus groups, the two separate focus groups were left in homogenous groups to provide them with familiarity and security of being with participants similar to themselves; they also knew

each other, and also put them at ease in an unfamiliar situation. QTs were put together in one group and NQTs were put together in another; the rationale for the groupings were explained to them prior to the groups being arranged. Confidentiality can be an issue as a participant, Robson (2011) and Gray (2009) argue that using human participants is a rich source of data but when grouping people together, such as focus groups, confidentiality can be an issue along with differing opinions. The management of participants for focus groups was considered carefully to ensure that appropriate participation was facilitated and confidentiality was not compromised. Participants were informed of their obligations at the start of the focus groups and reminded of their moral obligation to respect the beliefs and opinions of other participants. To allow for an honest and open forum, I was not present for the focus groups and they were not monitored; I was there at the start to set the focus group question and to reiterate expected behaviours, such as their commitment to maintaining other participants' confidentiality within the focus groups. I returned after one hour to close the audio recorded session and thank participants for taking part. The focus group participants were all adults with a working knowledge of the subject area, therefore self facilitated focus groups were appropriate for these two sets of people.

For the interviews, again, there may be issues with researcher bias and influence. Due to the nature of the method being more personal and face to face this may be more demonstrable compared to other forms of data collection. To minimise this, a routine strategy was to send the participants a list of the research questions prior to being interviewed. In this study, the approach for interviews was to be unstructured with one key question being asked at the start to elicit as much information from the interviewee as possible, therefore the one opening question was emailed to the participants in advance. This was to alleviate any apprehension they may have about the interview and also to reassure them of the direction of the research and their input. Finally, the place where the interviews took place was considered in depth. The participants were individually asked where they would like to be interviewed to allow for their comfort and give confidence in what for some was an unfamiliar situation. Allowing participants to choose their own interview

setting offers them control of the situation although a condition was issued that it had to be a place where a voice recorder would be able to record the interview clearly. I also made participants aware of some places that they may not have considered to be unsuitable, as the case study site has a building design with a high number of completely glass rooms; these glass rooms attract the attention of students and staff and they can be distracting in addition to being able to identify who is in the room. I was highly conscious that this may impact on participant engagement as a result; an outsider would not have had this tacit knowledge to utilise in creating a safe environment for participants. The booking of non glass rooms attracts high levels of bookings so I prepared well in advance for asking for the rooms as I had to ensure that the participants felt emotionally safe whilst participating; this was highly beneficial as one of the participants commented *'thank God, we're not in the glass rooms, you've found a proper room – I feel better in here',* when we met for their interview. As an outsider carrying out the research, this may not have been considered; it carried a great deal of influence in effective participation from the research participants and acted to reinforce their authenticity due to feeling they could talk freely in a non-glass room.

When carrying out a single case study consideration is also required for the place where the research is being undertaken. In this case it was an FE provider, which was also my place of work. Murphy and Skillen (2013) point out that there are implications for research when public concerns meet private interests, leading to a denial of access from organisations who are fearful of exposure and negative publicity; this may have negative connotations of research outputs and researchers based on past experience. To counteract any negativity associated with researching FE teacher professionalism it has been made explicit in the ethical approval applications that the research is about people not places, and that all identifying information will be removed from data prior to publication. Although it is acknowledged that it can be difficult for people to become separated from their work, I am interested in a concept that is part of a work identity and not representative of an organisational identity. From working across several FE organisations in a variety of roles, and also having a sample which consists of participants from

nine other FE organisations, elicits confidence that the case study site is not recognisable and that the data is representative of FE teachers as a whole.

Finally, a commitment to protecting data and ensuring confidentiality at all times was provided by reassuring the participants, and the case study site, that any data would be temporarily stored on a password protected encrypted data storage device for portability, whilst collecting data in different places; this was until being moved onto a university online storage facility (Box). Box is a two layered password protected system and compliant with my workplace data storage regulations, and also the new General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) which has superseded The Data Protection Act for data storage, protection, and privacy (ICO, 2018; Box, 2017). Participants were also made aware and reassured that their information and data would be anonymised after the pilot and exploratory questionnaire had taken place: the pilot and exploratory questionnaire did not collect names, only generalised job titles/positions. This was to facilitate who to select for focus group participation and interviews in the later stages, and was agreed by both ethical approval boards. Focus group and interview participants were made aware and also consented to their data being included in the final studies in the form of quotes on the proviso that any identifying information from quotes was removed. Under the principles of BERA (2011), participants were informed that data will remain anonymous at all times unless an issue of safeguarding arises which indicates that harm has taken place and has implications for vulnerable individuals in education; it is then my duty as a researcher to seek safeguarding advice from the university safeguarding officer. In storing the data past the end date of the research, participants have consented to their data being stored until six years after the study has ended, then it will be securely destroyed. Participants were asked on the consent form if they wished to review the findings after research was complete and will be provided with digital copies of the research on request.

3.8.0 Data Coding and Analysis Techniques

In using the selected methods, there is a likelihood that a substantial amount of data will be generated which may become unwieldy and confusing to

manage (Flick, 2014: Zuckerberg, 2008). For this reason, I have adopted a clear approach to coding which consists of a first and second cycle. In keeping with the reflexive nature of this study, data analysis was undertaken using a cyclical method, reflecting that the process is not linear and has been carried out with progressive refinement of codes and categories at each cycle based on Glaser and Strauss's (1967) Circular Model of the Research Process (fig. 1). Saldana (2016: 68) associates this with comparing 'data to data, data to code, code to code, code to category, category to category, category back to data etc.' In this study it was important to approach data analysis as a holistic process and not distinctly separate in any way as the phenomenon is layered and complex. To tell the story though the data effectively it would be a disservice to separate into distinct stages for the final analysis and discussion therefore it will be discussed thematically.

After the initial data collection for the pilot study and exploratory questionnaire, the stance of 'pragmatic eclecticism' was adopted for the remaining data collection: a deliberate wait for the data collection to be completed before selecting a coding method(s) (Saldana, 2016: 70). This was to ensure openness to what existing and new data was saying, and despite requiring substantial analysis, assisted in being able to see strong themes across the whole of the data from early on in the analysis. In using this stance, it also revealed some interesting recurring aspects surrounding teacher identity that had not been identified within the literature review or document analysis. In selecting the appropriate coding methods, Saldana (2016) observes that there is a direct research question alignment with the coding choices made, and for this study there is a strong relationship between the epistemological questions being asked and coding methods which explore the responses. This study has used epistemological research questions to explore the participants' theories of knowing and [gain] an understanding of the phenomenon of interest', through asking 'how does?.. What does it mean to be?', and 'what factors influence?'; questions which explore participant 'actions/processes and processes' (Saldana, 2016: 70). Their data best revealed their epistemologies on FE teacher identity and professionalism through the complementary coding methods of in vivo, structural and simultaneous (first cycle), then pattern

coding (second cycle). The transition from the first cycle to the second cycle involved reviewing the data as a whole and reflecting upon any commonalities and disparities, utilising first impressions and insider instinct, before moving onto the second cycle of pattern coding and finally thematic analysis.

It is important to mention at this point that as the data built, it was evident that there were clear commonalities across all data sets; creating very strong themes. These shared commonalties, through the narratives being similar in content, supported frequency counts to ascertain the importance of particular areas regarding FE teacher professionalism. This does not represent using a quantitative approach as sentences, phrases, and words were grouped together for their similarity rather than strictly counting exact words which were the same. In terms of prescriptiveness of applying codes, using a qualitative approach allowed for sentences, words, and phrases to have multiple codes applied; the frequency of the codes then built upon the development of consistent themes across the data. Saldana (2016: 25) associates this method with the 'quantities of qualities'; a useful method of confirming intensity of the same codes and themes which are apparent across different sets of data (Tashakkori and Teddlie, 1998). For this research in particular, it was apparent early on during data collection that there was commonality in responses which fits Saldana's (2016: 87) summary of ensuring the best outcomes with the data: 'sometimes words say it best; sometimes numbers do; and sometimes both can work in concert to compose a richer answer and corroborate each other'.

In the examples below, for the focus groups and interviews, split codes are used for each of the participants' responses. As a reflexive researcher, using this method to code brought me closer to the data as the narratives were manually coded line by line; each sentence was scrutinised to ascertain if a more detailed code could be applied which illuminated the data. This method also supported me to engage with the data first hand rather than use a software package which may have fostered a sense of data detachment. This method has also greatly assisted me in being familiar with the data and focused upon it, as opposed to the focus being upon the technical aspects of any data analysis software if this method was chosen. Choosing to code manually was

driven by my own desire to engage deeply with the data, and also being able to have full control and ownership of the coding process.

3.8.1 Exploratory Questionnaire Coding

Initial research was focussed around a mainly qualitative online pilot questionnaire which included a few informational quantitative questions (Appendix VII). This was to ascertain a baseline of 'attitudes, values and opinions' on themes in FE teacher professionalism from which further research was developed (Gray, 2009: 220). Despite containing several quantifiable questions, the method used for the pilot is to be considered a questionnaire as it does not relate to the common indicators of a survey which is mainly used for measurement of data. The majority of the questions are qualitative and are more closely associated with the characteristics of a questionnaire, its main aims to explore a phenomenon rather than to test and measure it (Oppenheim, 1992). Robson (2011) identifies that in using a questionnaire, issues can be initially explored and then methods developed in order to elaborate on emergent themes; this is beneficial for this research as what is currently known is unclear and complex. From the initial questionnaire it was hoped that this method will support the researcher in developing and telling the most 'convincing story that [I] can' (Robson, 2011: 243). In forming a baseline on FE teacher professionalism, research questions and participant selection were then refined in order to utilise the most beneficial methods for gathering high quality data (Table 1). Gray (2009: 233) argues that this allows 'for a variety of views to emerge, while group dynamics can often allow for the stimulation of new perspectives'.

There are several administrative benefits of using online questionnaires including ease of use, the ability to develop it responsively and accessibility for the users. Also it was cost free and time friendly for participants, particularly if the questions are streamlined (Gray, 2009). Participants were emailed a link to the questionnaires along with the participant information sheet and consent form; completing the online questionnaires acted as informed consent (a digital signature) in the absence of a signed hard copy, and participants were made aware of this within the main body of the email. They could choose to ignore

the request, respond that they did or did not want to take part and ask questions, take the questionnaires using informed consent, or take the questionnaires and return the completed consent form.

The online questionnaires also provided tools for the basic organising of data, simple visualisation and initial analysis. This is beneficial for surface analysis when time is restricted but should not be relied upon for thorough, deep data analysis. One of the main disadvantages of using an online data collection method can be Internet access and participant ability to use the tool. There were several strategies which were employed to mitigate this which included: utilising the online questionnaire software's readability and accessibility function to ensure that the content produced was highly accessible, the questionnaires were tested in preview mode by myself and two colleagues to ensure functionality, and developments were made after testing: access to the Internet was checked as all participants had access to email both at work and home. As a contingency the questionnaires were also available as downloadable hardcopies and were available to participants if they requested them.

In using questionnaires, it must be acknowledged that they do have limitations and cannot be solely relied upon for data collection when researching sociological issues which are multi-layered and complex (Robson, 2011). Gray (2009) and Black (1993) both warn of the pitfalls of using questionnaires, which if care is not taken, can be mainly descriptive when used in isolation; reliability and validity may be lost due to the sole reliance on an instrument for collecting data based on individual perceptions and opinions (Hancké: 2009). By using other methods, utilising interviews and focus groups, provided opportunities for a more robust collection of data for analysis as multiple methods act to increase trustworthiness, credibility and authenticity.

The choice and development of questions were initially based on the work of Hoyle (1974), who focuses his work on teacher professionalism, and research from Hargreaves et al., (2007) for The Teacher Status Project. Although these authors locate their work within the compulsory sector, it is recognised at the time of reviewing the literature that there was a significant gap in studies linked

to FE teacher professionalism and status, so well established studies from the compulsory sector were utilised at the start of the research to form research questions (Appendix VII). As the data collection methods evolved from the exploratory questionnaire, focus groups, and individual interviews, questions became more focused upon interpretations of FE teacher professional identity, and how this is orientated within the FE sector; this was based upon the policy context timeline (Appendix I) and key themes arising from the literature review such as professional constructs and models of professionalism (Table 1).

Initially, data was analysed quantitatively for contextual questions such as age, role, and characteristic identification which was then organised in highest to lowest counts (Appendix VIII). The majority of these questions were informational to identify if the participants were appropriate for the study, and also to determine which participant sets would be most beneficial to use for the next stages of the study. For multiple choice questions, responses were organised into highest to lowest counts and for open responses the remaining qualitative questions were analysed thematically by identifying common key words and phrases, and grouped into categories which were then reviewed for their repetition throughout the data. By using 'in vivo' coding in the first instance, this supported 'prioritis[ing] and honor[ing]' the participants' voices from the succinct narratives they provided for open questions (Saldana, 2016: 295). Categories began to appear which aligned to themes within the literature, and also started to provided emerging answers to the research questions. Through 'structural coding', the in vivo codes were then grouped (structured) into broad themes linked to the research questions and the data was recategorised to align with codes derived from Freidson (2004), Hoyle (1972) and Greenwood's (1957) table of professional characteristics (Table 1) for further analysis (Appendix X). Frequency of common answers and statements were also counted to determine commonalities and disparities in this first stage of main data collection. These findings were then used to inform the main area for the focus groups to discuss and review the sample choice.

3.8.2 Focus Group Coding

The tradition of qualitative research allows for a flexible approach to research methods and supports an inductive approach in initial data analysis. This inductive approach was utilised to ascertain key themes within the phenomenon, which were used to structure focus groups' questioning and explore responses to the concepts in greater detail. Findings from the pilot and subsequent exploratory questionnaire led to adopting the use of focus groups in order to 'amplify and understand the findings' (Robson, 2011: 296). As teacher professionalism in general is a social construct, using focus groups can provide an outlet for any compliments, cynicism or hostility towards the concept of FE teacher professionalism and 'allow for a variety of views to emerge, while group dynamics can often allow for the stimulation of new perspectives' (Gray, 2009: 233). Additionally, in using focus groups this allows for participants to construct knowledge through their collective grouping; this is an aspect I am particularly interested in as the general consensus from the literature implies that there is no one view of FE teacher professionalism and professional identity. This was of relevance when devising questions for the focus groups as consideration must be given though to the notions of construct validity, i.e. how the concept of professionalism is defined. Literature already tells us that the term is difficult to define which may impact on the responses given (Swann et al., 2010).

In seeking to explore ideas and opinions on FE teacher professionalism, using focus groups are of real benefit in gathering authentic data. One of the research aims is to give 'voice' to FE teachers; and as homogenous focus groups, Robson (2011) argues that participants may feel 'empowered' and a sense of safety if placed in a group with peers. Another benefit of using homogenous focus groups is that it can encourage free speech and reduce any anticipated apprehension of speaking in front of individuals who are not known to each other (Brown, 1999); this approach was taken reduce the issue of participants being inactive or passive during the session The literature tells us that FE teacher voices are underrepresented in the discourse of FE teacher professionalism and as an insider it is a personal aim to enable FE teachers in

the focus groups to feel confident and heard regarding their professional identities in a supportive group environment.

The participants who were invited to take part in the focus groups were all FE teachers at various stages in their careers; they were divided into two groups, one containing NQTs and another containing QTs. This delineation does not account for teaching experience as many of the NQTs have been teaching for a number of years unqualified (Appendix IV). This is also reflected in the QTs as many of them have recently qualified and are new to teaching. The rationale for the focus group groupings were that they were both purposive samples; the NQT group being the group I taught on their PGCE and the QT group being a teaching department at the case study site (Appendix III). All participants who were invited, accepted and took part in the focus groups. Two separate one hour focus groups were conducted with one group of 12 NQTs and another group of 10 QTs. Both of the groups self-selected what date, time and place they wanted to carry out their sessions through group consensus; as an insider, I wanted to promote self empowerment amongst the participants involved to reinforce their emotional safety, and support willingness to participate. I felt strongly that the research should be done with them rather than to them. The participants were given one hour to discuss amongst themselves the open ended statement, delivered by myself: 'discuss FE teacher professionalism'. A digital voice recorder was left in the room for one hour, and the participants self-supervised and policed their behaviour and etiquette. Prior to the focus groups taking place, all participants gave informed consent after reading the information sheet, and they were reminded of these again before the focus groups started their discussions.

When utilising focus groups for research it is important to consider some of the negative aspects of their use to ensure that this method is effective in producing rich and trustworthy data. Robson (2011) argues that despite being popular in social research, focus groups have difficulties with dynamics, hierarchies and domination; all of which require careful management (Robinson, 1999). Normally this would be skilfully managed by the facilitator of the focus groups to ensure that everyone has a chance to speak and are

not fearful of repercussions of what they say; particularly where confidentiality between participants is concerned. In these two separate focus groups, dialogue had already been established between myself and the participants on ethical behaviour and group etiquette which instilled confidence in leaving them to self-police. Additionally, I was already known to the participants in my roles at the case study site, which gave reassurance and reinforced my commitment to avoid influencing the focus group discussions in any way by not being there whilst they took place. Focus groups participants were also reminded of ethical behaviour principles and group etiquette immediately prior to the sessions taking place, and their right to withdraw on the day or afterwards before data analysis took place.

Through reflexive accounting continuously during the research I believe I have been transparent on my positionality and the influence this has had on instigating the research and wanting to explore an issue which affects myself and my peers. Self-auditing has given me the confidence to remove myself from facilitation of the focus groups and pass this on to the group participants after deciding on delivering only one key statement for them to discuss. As an insider, I felt with a degree of certainty that I knew my audience, the participants who are FE teachers, and felt reassured that they would provide authentic data without a gatekeeper in the sessions.

A final consideration for focus groups, and interviews, is the substantial amount of data they can generate, which may be overwhelming to the researcher. Said (1994: 17) reinforces this in stating that for researchers, invariably work is always ‘unfinished and necessarily imperfect’; research can be a messy, ongoing and unfinished process. To mitigate data overload, also known as analysis paralysis, Flick (2014) recommends being organised and thorough from the start with file management and file naming, where possible, breaking down the data into manageable chunks if this does not compromise data quality.

Data overload is a real issue for any researcher and can impede research progress; with this in mind I have separated the data into four categories: questionnaires, focus groups (1 and 2) and interviews 1-5, then further sub

categorised them into groups for ease of data management and analysis (Zuckerberg, 2008) (Table 7). In thinking reflexively, it has been acknowledged that the messy process of research has created discomfort within my normal ways of working; this has been addressed by utilising support from several academic communities of practice and also engaging with a critical friend who has been through the Doctoral research process themselves.

Method and order	**Min**	**Words**	**Data categories for analysis**						
Pilot qnnaire 1st	NA	NA	NQTs	QTs	Prnts	FE stdnts	NA	NA	NA
Explor. qnnaire 2nd	NA	NA	NQTs	QTs	FE Mngrs		FE media reps.	Prnts	FE stdnts
Focus group 1 3rd	55	3821	NQTs	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Focus group 2 3rd	35	14500	QTs	Na	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Intvws 4th	153	15100	QT 1	QT 2	NQT 3	QT 4	QT 5	NA	NA

Table 7. – Data management organisation.

In viewing the data as a whole, it was clear that for all stages of data collection there were strong, consistent, repetitive themes. In vivo coding was used to highlight important, relevant and interesting words, phrases and short statements made by the participants then structural coding was applied to bring together similar codes (Saldana, 2016). Simultaneous coding was also applied as throughout the data there were consistent instances of overlap and multiple meaning in the rich narratives provided. Patterns were identified within the data and these were coded and collated onto a combined spreadsheet to enable efficient cross referencing of codes for the next stage of coding and analysis (Appendix XII). It also supported the building of repeated, consistent themes throughout the different sets of data to build a comprehensive, and cohesive, picture of FE teacher professionalism.

Focus group 2	**Narrative (green for narrative used)**	**First coding (initial themes)**	**Second coding (overall themes)**

Participant response	47. We are also accountable 152. even though we are not in control, 86. 93. 152. we are accountable for those results, aren't we?	47	Suggests that professionalism is about compliance	10	Power/ control
		15	Professionals are accountable	3	Defined characteristics of a professional – micro
		2	A professional is defined by a set of characteristics	10	Power/ control
		93	Issues with students/data are attributed to the teacher – blame culture	10	Power/ control
		86	Suggests that professionalism is measured on performance/ performativity – where's the morality?	10	Power/ control

Table 8. – Focus group coding example.

3.8.3 Interview Coding

The use of unstructured interviews for the final stage of data collection built upon the data collected from the focus groups, and assisted in development of areas to target for further information and clarification regarding FE teacher professionalism. Through the use of interviews, I sought to clarify and explore anomalies, ideas and opinions of individuals regarding their thoughts on teachers in FE. As a constructivist researcher I was drawn to interviews in order to acquire multiple perspectives of a phenomenon, and provide a platform to explore participants' understanding of their own professional identities. This final stage in the data collection allows for the researcher to probe, if needed, for further detail as 'beliefs and attitudes... are relatively difficult to get at. They are often complex and multidimensional' (Robson, 2011: 280). By using interviews this enabled further insights to be discussed, and look more deeply into the perspectives of the FE teachers taking part on a one to one basis as participants may reveal more than they would within a group setting. Using another method for data collection supported the gradual building of data and inductive processes as well as reducing the impact of

respective weaknesses if one method was used in isolation. Themes which emerged from the data formed a basis for questions in unstructured interviews; the rationalisation for using interviews was to allow further, more detailed responses to be heard, and also to determine if their responses correlated or opposed any data previously collected.

For the interview phase, five individual one hour unstructured interviews took place; one with an NQT, and four with QTs (Appendix III). The five participants chosen had not been invited to take part in the pilot or exploratory questionnaire, or either of the focus groups, and were randomly selected from five different departments of teaching staff at the case study site (Appendix IV). The rationale behind this was to ensure that there was a fresh layer of perspectives to add to the data. All participants were known to me through my various roles within the case study organisation, and some had expressed a wish to take part in the studies after attending seminars within the case study site on particular aspects of my PhD work. To make effective use of time, participants were invited to book a one hour slot at their convenience in the place where they would feel most comfortable. This was to ensure that they felt in control and comfortable with the session in order to facilitate the best results and avoid chances of withdrawal: this strategy was effective as all participants attended their individual interviews and stated that they felt comfortable in their chosen surroundings. In addressing my positionality and potential opportunity for bias, the interviews were unstructured and asked only one opening question: 'can you tell me what a professional is, and how does this apply to FE teachers?'. Any questions posed by myself following the opening question were for clarification or further explanation only.

Although interviews provide a foundation for collecting a rich source of data there are also difficulties with their use, which have to be factored into the studies; the main factor being researcher influence. Researcher positionality has previously been discussed in detail and the effect this may have on participants; this has been robustly addressed throughout the first two data collection stages. This does become more difficult though during the interview stage, and I acknowledge that my position could influence what was said in

the interviews. The most obvious strategy to mitigate this would be to use another person to carry out the interviews, but I feel that it has already been successfully argued that my knowledge and experience of the research area allows for greater engagement and understanding of what participants are discussing as opposed to a non subject specialist. Mishler (1991: 27) argues that by being detached from participants in qualitative research 'decontextualizes the meaning of responses'. Jacob and Furgerson (2012: 9) offer a strategy for this problem by advising the insider researcher to 'close your mouth and listen!.. you should not let your experiences overtake theirs'; further support for this is seen as they surmise that minimum interference from the researcher at data collection level supports 'cleaner' data analysis. As in the focus groups, the method used to ensure minimum researcher interference was to use one opening question, and after that the only questions used were for clarification of what was said if it was unclear or needed further explanation.

With the literature leading us to believe that professionalism is subjective and deeply individualised, there also may be issues during interviews with 'what people believe and what they do, and between what they think they do and their actions in practice' (Gray, 2009: 233). It is for this reason that interviews were not used in isolation but as part of a multi-method approach. It is inevitable that participants will have a construction of their own reality which will be evident during an interview, but solely relying on individual interview participants as the sole source of data may reduce balance and credibility in the research (May, 2002). Providing a balance to this are the arguments that face to face data collection may elicit the truth more readily than faceless methods of collecting data. Additionally, the interviewer can observe body language and detect intonation, which may not be apparent if they were not there. Approaching this reflexively, Chanter (2009: 290) asks us to strike a balance between 'intuitive and critical thinking', in order to reinforce trustworthiness in the data; which in this case has resulted in utilising interviews as a final method of data collection after other methods have been used.

Finally, for the individual interviews, the same process and coding methods were followed and applied as the focus groups. The codes generated and developed from the exploratory questionnaire and focus groups were applied to the data in addition to any new codes added where new information emerged. This method built upon the already established codes and rapidly illuminated any additional emerging themes and disparities in the data. The benefit of using previous codes were that data could be coded more efficiently and patterns and disparities in the data were evident from early on, allowing connections to be made across the data sets and effectively built upon. At this final stage of coding, few new codes were generated as the already established codes were highly applicable to the interview data and the themes were consistent and repetitive through all stages of data collection.

Interview 2	**Narrative (green for narrative used)**	**First coding (initial themes)**		**Second coding (overall themes)**	
Participant response	Um, I think it depends on, um, the balance. So, for example, 16. 18. if somebody doesn't necessarily have as many qualifications as another person but they have a vast wealth of experience, in my opinion that is better than the qualifications in some areas. 16. 18. 105. For example, the-their hands on trade, things like that. If somebody comes into teaching with a 30 years' experience of working on a building site, then surely that's better than a few qualifications that have tested them once or twice on few different things because they've	16	Qualifications do not necessarily make you professional – goes against traditional notions of professionalism	5	Gatekeeping/de-professionalisation
		18	Experience is just as important as qualifications	3	Defined characteristics of a professional - micro
		105	Suggests experience is a characteristic of being a professional	2	Defined characteristics of a professional - macro
		8	Links quals to being professional or being perceived as being professional	5	Gatekeeping/de-professionalisation
		111	Qualifications are important if you want to be	2	Defined characteristics

	been working at it for 30 years. So in my experience, 8. 111. qualifications are obviously essential to a professional but 18. 105. I think experience is-is the more valuable asset.		considered a professional – enhances it		of a professional - macro

Table 9. – Interview coding example.

3.8.4 First to Second Cycle Coding

For the second cycle, the data was then reviewed as a whole to determine patterns and themes in the narratives and incidences of repetition were noted numerically (Appendix XII). This was to determine any consistent references to particular themes, and also to signpost any areas of disparity. It must be noted at this point that the data is not being coded or analysed using quantitative measures; using repetition counts purely serves to show levels of commonalties and disparities in the already split coded data and bring them back together as major/minor themes. At this stage, as the split codes were organised into patterns (lump codes), they facilitated in forming a direction and insight into the underpinning beliefs and influences on FE teacher professionalism. Using pattern coding to devise lump codes, supported coding a substantial amount of data to condense meaning into ten key areas for further focused thematic analysis; these exploratory areas were comprised of the following categories listed below.

Code no.	Data category (main themes)
1	Media influence/portrayal/observation
2	Defined characteristics of a professional – macro
3	Defined characteristics of a professional – micro
4	Identity
5	Gatekeeping/de-professionalisation
6	Is teaching a profession or vocation?
7	Status/respect
8	Professionalism is difficult to define
9	Deviance
10	Power/control

Table 10. – Key codes derived from first and second cycle coding.

3.8.5 Thematic Analysis

Once all data was coded, the data was thematically analysed based on the patterned coded responses; this method was attractive as it employed a practical approach and advocates building the chosen coding methods that had already been utilised (Braun and Clarke, 2006) (fig. 3). In working across the data sets, patterns were already evident which were indicating consistent meaning across all data sets. These themes were then analysed alongside the main findings of the specialist literature, and then visually mapped to show the links between the themes, data and literature, and facilitated finding meaning in the data at manifest and latent levels.

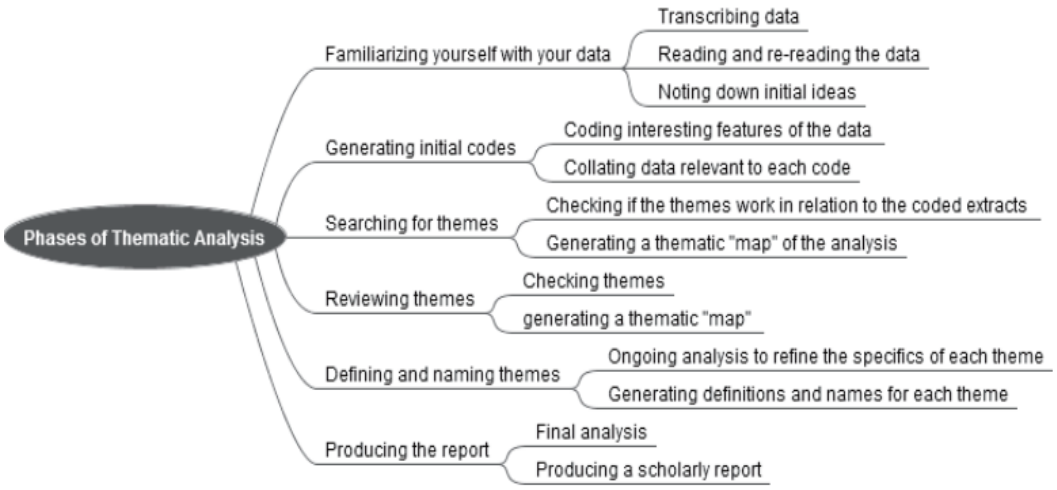


Figure 3 – Phases of thematic analysis (Gallardo-Echenique, 2014 adapted from Braun and Clarke, 2006).

For this particular phenomenon, thematically analysing the data allowed for latent level themes, such as Impostor Syndrome, to emerge during the mapping process. It also brought together overarching themes across the data and provided coherency of themes for a complex phenomenon which involved a wide range of beliefs, constructs and experiences.

3.8.6 Document Analysis

It is important to mention that extensive document analysis was undertaken on policy and regulations relating to the FE sector and FE teacher professionalism

ranging from 1960 to 2019 alongside key literature on models of professionalism (Appendix I). Policy and regulation are an integral part of this sector and offer several advantages to a research project such as: ease of availability, open relay of facts, and reliability in access (Bowen, 2009: Yin, 2003; Merriam, 1988). This form of secondary research acted to contextualise, track, and frame the ongoing developments regarding the FE sector and FE teacher professionalism as a whole, and served to underpin the issues arising from the FE landscape. Flick (2014: 357) observes this as 'communicative turns in constructing versions of events', and illustrates the how and why concerning the changes within the sector and FE teacher professionalism. In using documents, further support is again provided by Flick (2014), in so far as that they may provide relevance for identified issues or failures which sit within the specific research topic, and also may verify, corroborate or contradict findings/evidence; all aspects which can facilitate further exploration and investigation. Additionally, they provide the researcher with strong historical grounding in the particular research area being reviewed (Merriam, 1988). All of the aspects above are crucial in trying to understand the sector and how professional identities in FE teachers are formed, therefore document analysis was integral to the research as a method of collecting secondary data.

In order to systematically analyse the documents, a timeline was established and key policy and regulation linked to the FE sector and FE teachers were organised chronologically from the earliest date to the most recent (the cut-off date for in depth review being 2017). After the documents were sorted into date order, they were then systematically reviewed from the earliest date to the most recent and notes were made on the document context and key contents. They added another dimension to the research which was factual and of public record, and supported the researcher to 'elicit meaning, gain understanding, and develop empirical knowledge' from key stakeholders and influencers within FE, as well as building historical context (Bowen, 2009: 27). As part of the comprehension and evaluation process during this stage, they also supported the development of the research questions and strengthened the direction of the questions to elicit the most appropriate responses for meaningful data collection (Table 1). Trustworthiness and authenticity is also

supported in using this additional method of document analysis as triangulation is enhanced through utilising multiple sources of evidence.

3.9.0 The Pilot Study

A pilot study was carried out prior to the full data collection taking place, with all participants at each stage being fully informed of the research intentions through a participant information sheet, consent form, and also through personal and group dialogue at the case study site (Appendix V/VI). Prior to undertaking the data collection in full, a targeted review of the literature was carried out which supported selection of the participants whom I wanted to focus upon, and then further refine this after the questionnaire stages. At the outset, from literature, there were many voices providing an opinion on FE teacher professionalism; this supported the selection of a cross section of participants for the initial pilot study and subsequent exploratory questionnaire.

The small mixed sample invited to take part in the pilot questionnaire (Appendix VI) consisted of: two qualified FE teachers (QTs), ten trainee teachers/newly qualified teachers (NQTs), one parent/guardian of an FE student, and two FE students. The response rate for the pilot study was 40 per cent (fig. 4).

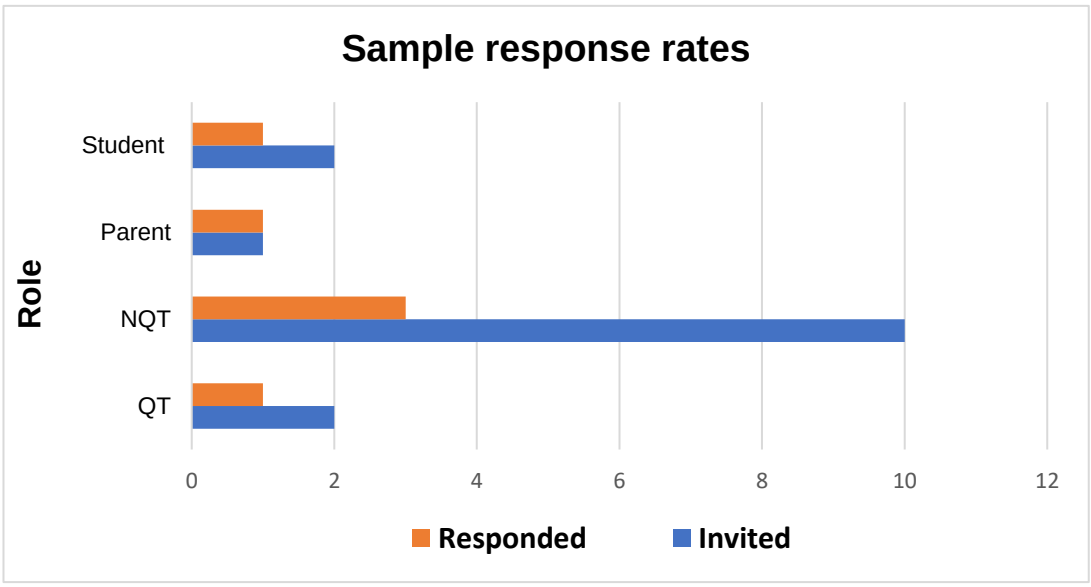


Figure 4 – Chart showing participant response rate to the pilot study.

The pilot study data was analysed both quantitatively and qualitatively using several methods. For multiple choice questions responses were organised into highest to lowest counts and for open responses the responses were themed into common recurring categories (Appendix VIII). The following analysis provides a brief overview of the pilot data, organised sequentially by question numbers and also includes a compact rationale for the questions being asked (Appendix VIII).

Question 1. Please indicate your age bracket

Question 2. Please tell me your status

Participants were asked their age as literature suggests that there has been a fracture in professional identities for FE teachers based upon old and new professionalism ideologies, and the evolving notions of multiple professional identities within one profession (Wallace, 2013; DBIS, 2012; McCullough et al., 2000). There have been suggestions that the fractures could be attributed to age, or linked to generational experience, and therefore perceptions of professionalism and professional identities may be influenced by these factors. The majority of respondents (3) were in the category aged 22-30 years old NQTs with the remaining respondents (3) evenly spread across age categories and status of 18-21, 31-40 and 41-50 age groups (Appendix VIII).

As previously discussed, only FE teachers (QTs and NQTs), parents and students were asked to participate in the pilot study (Appendix VII). For the exploratory questionnaire, more individuals were asked to participate in the study to ensure that there was a more adequate sample size to address the lack of representation in the pilot study from other key staff who work in FE. It was important that for the next stage of the research that FE managers and educational media representatives were included in the studies as they were not included in the pilot due to issues with gaining accessibility. Their voices were important in the next stages to determine their perceptions of FE teacher professionalism, and explore if they have any impact on what is perceived as FE teacher professionalism.

Question 3. Would you say your personal experience of education has been…

Participants were asked what their personal education of experience has been as a whole in order to explore further if their experiences are linked to existing and future perceptions of teachers. Again, this was to add context to the research findings and based upon Hoyle's (1972) suggestion that personal educational experiences are likely to influence how we perceive teachers, and also how we act as teachers. Unfortunately, with the questionnaire being anonymous it would be difficult to determine who indicated positive/negative responses and discuss this with them further during interviews although this was an area to look out for during the next stages of the research. The data showed that the majority of respondents (83 per cent) had a mixture of both positive and negative experiences in school with none stating they had negative experiences only (Appendix VIII). This particular question serves to open up the discussion during focus groups and interviews on experiences linked to personal constructs on professionalism.

Question 4. Can you define what professionalism in FE (college) teaching is?

Question 5. Please give your definition below. If you are unable to give a definition please add why this is not possible.

The majority of participants (80 per cent) were positive that they could define what professionalism in FE teaching is, yet when their definitions were analysed there were very little commonalities (Appendix VIII). Tentative analysis of responses gained regarding defining FE teacher professionalism appears to correlate with empirical studies, that teacher professionalism, in general, is hard to define; it consists of many elements. One respondent stated that '*there isn't a 'definition' as such, there's too much to define!*' (QT). After categorising individual responses by themes (Appendix VIII), it would appear that there were no common defining features of professionalism in FE teaching; there are many features/characteristics coming through and this was a relatively small sample. It was anticipated that once more participants were invited to take part in the next stages that even more suggestions would be provided.

The data shows that that there were two themes for professionalism in FE; these were directly related to students and consisted of working with students and supporting students (Appendix VIII). This was an interesting line of inquiry to follow as previous research identified that these characteristics, care and nurturing of individuals, correlates more with a vocation or occupation rather than profession; this is an ongoing debate and worthy of further investigation to determine which category FE teaching is most closely aligned with.

Question 6. Please select as many as you like from the list below which you feel are characteristics of a professional FE (college) teacher.

Participants were asked to select professional characteristics from a list of 11 common characteristics associated with normative accounts of professionalism from the work of Freidson (2004), Hoyle (1972), and Greenwood (1957). The majority of participant choices did not correlate with their previous suggestions of what they defined as a professional; that is, apart from the theme of altruism which includes references to care and nurture (Appendix VIII). Respondents indicated (100 per cent) that they agreed that being selfless is a characteristic of a professional FE teacher; this directly links to commonalities in independent responses previously in the pilot study regarding working with and supporting students – being caring and nurturing.

Characteristics associated with being a professional FE teacher linked closely to mainly soft skills in the previous set of free responses, whereas when participants were provided with a pre-populated set of characteristics they mainly agreed with normative accounts of professional characteristics that were given to them. All participants agreed that professional FE teachers are reflective, competent, accountable, responsible, ethical, knowledgeable, trusted, qualified and belong to a professional body. They overwhelmingly chose characteristics which are indicative of a professional in general and aligned them with their beliefs about what an FE teaching professional should be enacting. What is of interest, is that only one respondent indicated that they thought being autonomous was a characteristic of being a professional FE teacher. Again, this correlates with historical and current debates on the power struggles within education; autonomy being a key feature that is under attack

in the realm of teacher professionalism, gradually diminishing with the influence of multiple stakeholders.

Question 7. Are there any other characteristics that you feel a professional FE (college) teacher should have?

For this question, respondents provided further input on other characteristics they felt a professional FE teacher should have, and aimed to build a picture of commonalties between the suggestions given and the normative accounts of professional characteristics. The literature indicates that there is much crossover between teachers in all sectors regarding professional characteristics and behaviours, yet there is also an underlying issue of policy, literature and discourse providing infinite lists of professional characteristics and qualities aligned to FE teachers with many drawn or borrowed from other professions.

Being approachable was the most common response and does tentatively link to altruistic behaviours as outlined in normative accounts of professional behaviour. New themes introduced at this point included creativity, innovation, humour, reliability, honesty, and having a good personality; thus adding further themes for research on the concepts of FE teacher professionalism. The data also serves to emphasise its complexity and multi-faceted structure as a concept, as illustrated in empirical evidence (Wallace, 2013).

Question 8. Please name up to three professions which you consider of a similar status to teaching in FE (college).

Within the literature there are emerging arguments as to whether teaching in general can be classed as a profession, vocation, or occupation. Participants identified 13 different professions which they perceived to be comparable in status to teaching in an FE college (Appendix VIII); the commonality being nurses and doctors. It is of interest that participants chose these roles as comparable with FE teaching in status, as both doctors and nurses are strongly associated with caring which lends itself to vocation despite the level of qualifications required to become them. Again, questions arose from this data as to where FE teaching sits on the professional continuum, when data is indicating that there are many aspects of FE teaching which align with FE

teachers sitting within the parameters of vocationalists/occupationalists. Another commonality within the data was linked to status association with other types of teachers and educational support staff. The types of teachers suggested were varied and included learning support tutors, teaching assistants, primary school teachers, practitioners, trainers, lecturers, and university tutors. This could indicate that FE teacher status is ambivalent, despite data linking it to other types of teachers, as the status level between a learning support tutor and a university tutor may not be comparable in terms of qualifications, knowledge, and experience.

Of particular interest regarding teacher status is the work of Hargreaves et al. (2007), who carried out extensive research with school teachers to determine perceptions regarding their own status as professionals; their findings suggested that teachers feel they have low status but their perceptions were unfounded. The suggestions provided by the participants are worthy of further research, through focus groups and interviews, as at first glance perceptions from the data appear to be entirely individualised and not in alignment; therefore it is important to explore in more detail where these comparisons derive from and what they are grounded in.

Question 9. What is your opinion of teachers in FE (college)?

Opinions were sought on what participants thought of FE teachers; this was to review if they were positive, negative, or ambivalent. Previous research indicates that teachers themselves, in general, feel that they are viewed in a negative light; almost ostracised in their work. Yet there is ongoing debate about these perceptions being unfounded, with teachers appearing to align themselves as being victims within the profession (Fino, 2019: Hargreaves et al., 2007); the pilot data adding weight to this. The majority of respondents appear to corroborate with this theme of negativity, with comments such as, '*we are seen as a 'lesser' teacher*' (QT), and the role carries '*an exceptional amount of responsibility*' (parent/guardian); this is in addition to being expected to 'work extra hours which encroach personal life'. The working environment and influence of stakeholders was also apparent in relation to FE being a 'challenging environment', and having 'too many restraints' linked to having

the freedom to administering discipline; this aligns with the literature which argues that the marketisation of the sector has had an impact on freedom and autonomy for FE teachers, particularly in decision making.

Gatekeeping is also touched upon a number of times by FE teaching insiders, including a QT and trainee/NQT. The qualified FE teacher suggests that low status is associated with not having to be qualified to teach in the sector with the trainee/NQT arguing that FE teachers should have higher levels of qualifications than the current requirements to work in the sector. FE teachers themselves are indicating that the entry into FE teaching is not guarded adequately, and in light of the deregulation of FE teaching qualifications,. this does open up the sector to an extensive pool of individuals who are not meeting with the minimum criteria to be considered professionals as a whole because they are not qualified.

These responses portray FE teachers and teaching in a less than favourable light, although there was one instance where FE teachers were viewed positively based on personal experience. The participant, who was a student, stated that their experience was 'really inspiring and motivating, and incredibly encouraging even though I worked really hard and achieved high marks they would always push me to the next step'. It is important to consider in the next stages of research that this response is based on solely on personal experience of being at college as a student; the other responses have been derived from positions within education and the difficulties of working/operating within the sector. It is important to remember in the next stages of data collection the perspective the opinion is being gained from, and its relevance to the research overall, bearing in mind that the stance of the individual may affect their perspectives and their responses respectively.

Question 10. Please tell me if there is anything that influences your thoughts/opinions on teachers in FE (college).

Themes of power, crises, and settlements in FE occur frequently in contemporary literature, and are usually initiated by policy or regulation change. By asking participants what influenced their thoughts and opinions on FE teachers it was hoped to ascertain and explore links between distribution

of power and control; particularly when involving participants who work within the sector. Surprisingly the influences generated had no firm links to power and control, apart from one respondent stating that the government and funding cuts influenced them in their thoughts and opinions on FE teachers (Appendix VIII). The remaining respondents showed similarities in their influences by alluding that various experiences of the sector influenced their thoughts and opinions, such as working in and amongst FE teachers or having friends/relations who work in FE (Appendix VIII). The data shows a level of reflectivity from participants, with the themes of power and control not appearing to be a significant influence for the majority of respondents.

Question 11. Do you think that the status of FE (college) teachers is important?

Status within FE teaching is part of an ever growing debate over whether it actually exists, has been reduced, or is a concept that has to be earned through various mechanism and means. The majority of respondents (80 per cent) agreed that status is important for FE teachers, and provided emotive responses such as, '*yes extremely important*' (parent/guardian), and '*status is important as it reflects on the organisation*' (NQT). Gatekeeping is also clearly evident in the responses too, with participants consistently referring to the importance of being appropriately qualified to work in the sector and the implications of this if not upheld. NQTs and parents/guardians all believe that being qualified is imperative in a number of ways including, '*if the staff are not suitably qualified/lack relevant skills then this can result in a negative reputation within the community*' (NQT), and 'it is essential to have qualifications in order to work' (parent/guardian).

Strength of feeling is threaded throughout the responses, with status emerging as important, and closely linked to self-confidence, the role, and the community. It is of note that status between education sectors also arises in an NQT response, '*our status isn't as grand as primary or secondary*' (QT). This correlates with feelings of inadequacy experienced by individuals and the FE sector as a whole, and evidenced from the literature, mainly due to the sector being transient and emergent in nature; a sector that is increasingly

difficult to clearly define. Perceptions of status is an aspect worth further pursuance, perhaps by asking FE teachers to rank their perceived status compared to other teachers in compulsory and HE; and also asking FE students and their parents to rank teacher status to determine if there are any similarities or differences in their rankings based upon their positionality.

Question 12. Do you think FE (college) teachers are portrayed in a positive or negative light? Can you explain why or give examples below.

Within the specific literature, and discourse, educationalists and teachers appear to be unanimous that the government and the media are instrumental in promoting and upholding a negative image of the teaching profession and the staff that work within it. Yet this has been challenged through the findings of The Teacher Status Project (Hargreaves et al., 2007), which found that teachers (in compulsory education) were ill informed of the intentions of media, and teachers should recognise that they are on the side of teachers. Although the study from Hargreaves et al. (2007) is grounded within the compulsory sector, it does offer transferable insights into FE, as there appears to be similar issues within the literature. These insights refer to FE teachers being portrayed negatively by various stakeholders; it is of interest to the research to determine what the parameters are for which FE teachers are judged in a positive and negative light.

The literature tells us that FE teachers are portrayed as both positive and negative due to the socio-economic status of the provider, the type of student being taught, what educational experience those students have previously had and, what they study at college; respondents comment that these factors all effect perceptions – both positively and negatively. There were no overwhelming responses for entirely positive or negative portrayals, which can be identified through the use of non-committal language such as, '*negative portrayal may come from isolated incidents or media portrayal*' (NQT), and '*I think college lecturers are portrayed in mostly a positive light*' (NQT). The majority of the responses were relatively mixed and balanced and take into account stakeholder influences on FE teachers, in particular the influence of students. The weight of student influence over FE teachers is an interesting

area to explore further, as historically students held relatively little power over teachers; this now seems to have shifted post marketisation of the sector and may be influential in how FE teachers conduct themselves professionally and personally.

3.10.0 Concluding Remarks

It is recognised that concepts of professionalism within FE are in the relatively early stages of development compared to the compulsory and HE sector. The aim of the pilot study was to provide a baseline of data for further research: to explore the concepts of teacher professionalism in FE in the absence of any definitive contemporary literature in an emerging and divergent sector. The discourse surrounding FE teacher professionalism is wide, and consists of many interlinking, and at the same time, opposing elements and factors which this research seeks to explore and aims to understand further.

At this early stage this research recognises that there are the beginnings of complexity regarding FE teacher professional identity due to the expansive responses provided by participants when asked to define and explain what makes an FE teaching professional. The pilot study facilitated the development of more targeted questions for the next stage, as at that particular time no definitive suggestions were provided on what makes a FE teaching professional when compared with normative accounts of professionals in general. What is noteworthy from the data, is that participants made frequent references to FE teachers being linked with care and nurture; giving rise to further investigation during focus groups and interviews to determine the parameters of professionalism in FE teaching.

A definitive image of a professional FE teacher has not been identified during these early stages of the research; what can be ascertained from the pilot is that perceptions and recognition of FE teacher professional identity is complex and consists of many traits, skills, qualities, and characteristics which are interlinked and show layers of fusion and degrees of inseparability. Due to the expansive lists of general teacher characteristics and professional standards, which have been adopted and adapted by FE teachers based on their positions within education and their personal experiences, the inconsistencies in the

data were expected. The lack of agreement on what defines an FE teacher as a professional is consistent with current literature, and was a key driver in exploring this further.

What is evident from the pilot study was that status is important both for insiders and outsiders of the sector. Literature tells us that teachers from all sectors indicate that status is important for a variety of reasons, and this impacts on the way they feel about themselves and self-worth/value in both a positive and negative way. In the pilot the majority of participants were NQTs, therefore it could be argued that strong feelings about status would inevitably arise due to NQTs being at the entry point of the sector. Despite this, a parent/guardian and student also indicated that status was important too, illustrating that status levels are an aspect worthy of further exploration.

To conclude, the pilot provided initial data to be able to move forward and refine the research questions to harvest more informative answers based on participant positioning within the sector. This is an important aspect of the research as previously the focus was on the responses as a rich source of data, as opposed to who specifically provided it. The pilot study led to the realisation that it is significant who the responses come from as the background and positioning may influence perceptions and answers; insiders such as QTs/NQTs are of importance as it is the construction of their professional identities I was particularly interested in. By including outsiders such as parents/guardians and students, their inclusion was of secondary importance; they provided external views of FE teacher professionalism and offered alternative perspectives which were not as relevant to the research aims.

On a final note, the data collected for the pilot study illustrated that there are emerging contradictions with previous research, but at the same time there are striking commonalities: FE teacher professionalism is hard to define, status is of high importance to insiders and outsiders, and power and control from various stakeholders are influential on how professional identities are formed and professionalism is measured for FE teachers.

Chapter 4. Data Analysis and Findings

4.0.0 Introduction

This chapter firstly presents the data from the exploratory online questionnaire, of which there were 29 responses from staff, students and parents who either work or were associated with FE (Appendix III). Their responses and the findings are presented in question order with a rationale provided as to why a more refined sample was selected after evaluating the responses and validity within the research aims. Secondly, data is presented from the two focus groups and five interviews combined (Appendix III). The focus groups were split into focus group 1 (12 NQTS) and focus group 2 (10 QTs), the interviews consisted of four QTs and one NQT. Both the focus group findings and the interview findings are presented under the ten themes which arose from initial analysis of the data representing the responses across the data collection methods (Table 10). The narratives of the participants are presented as unedited voices in order to reflect their genuine feelings regarding their professionalism and to also evidence trustworthiness and authenticity. The rich data they have provided is compared and contrasted with the perspectives existing within the literature and the policy context for the sector. As theory has emerged, the theoretical framework was drawn upon to determine key areas for review in the discussion chapter: Is FE teaching a profession?, What is FE teacher professional identity?, and How do FE teachers think and act professionally?

4.1.0 The Exploratory Questionnaire

As a starting point, I was keen to gather information from a cross section of individuals who were linked to FE and whose opinions provided a base line for creating a purposive sample. A cross section sample of: FE students; parents of FE students; managers within FE; FE media representatives; FE teachers; and newly qualified FE teachers, were invited to participate in the first stage of the data collection. All were situated within the case study institution (Appendix III); this was determine who would fit into substantive criteria relevant to the research aims for the main data collection.

In total 50 exploratory questionnaires were sent out to the following groups: 30 QTs/NQTs; 8 FE managers; 2 FE media representatives; 5 Parents of FE students; and 5 FE students. Being mindful of a lack of responses potentially posing an issue, participants were again reminded via email and a link of the research taking place to see if they would like to participate; a call was also made for participants through a closed social network group for NQTs/QTs. After sending out the invitations to participate in the questionnaire, participants were slow to respond which affected the agreed timescales. Surprisingly, the call to participate via the social network proved to be a popular method of recruiting the same participants with 50 per cent of respondents taking part in the questionnaire within 24 hours of asking. This method was far more effective than sending out individual emails although it is recognised that in using social networks for participant invitation there may be respondents that are unsuitable to take part in the research. In total 29 participants completed the questionnaire (58 per cent response rate). The following findings provide a brief overview of the data, organised sequentially by question numbers (Appendix IX/X).

Question 1. Please indicate your age bracket.

Question 2. Please tell me your status.

The first two questions of the questionnaire were designed to identify a brief status of the participants; their ages and roles within the education landscape (fig. 5). The majority of the respondents were QTs (17), followed by NQTs (4) and FE managers (4); ensuring that there was a high representation from those in roles which were of interest (fig. 5). One media representative, one parent and two students also responded. The ages of the majority of respondents (10) were between 31-40 years old and were QTs. The ages of the participants were initially of interest as this was part of Hargreaves et al., (2007) study to determine if age was an underlying factor in personal constructs of professional identity. Despite not being as useful as part of the data for this study, it did raise my awareness of differing perceptions of status and respect for teachers which could be attributed to generational experiences of education and teachers.

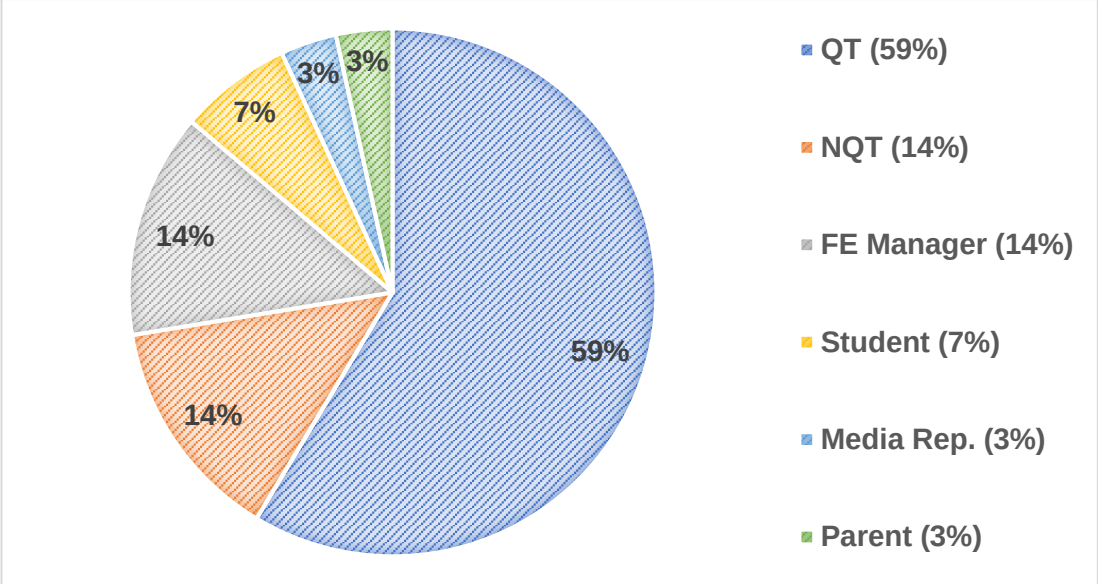


Figure 5 – Exploratory questionnaire participant demographic.

Question 3. Can you give a definition of what you think Further Education is?

Due to the growing remit of FE over the preceding twenty years, I was interested to find out if participants could clearly define what FE is (fig. 6).

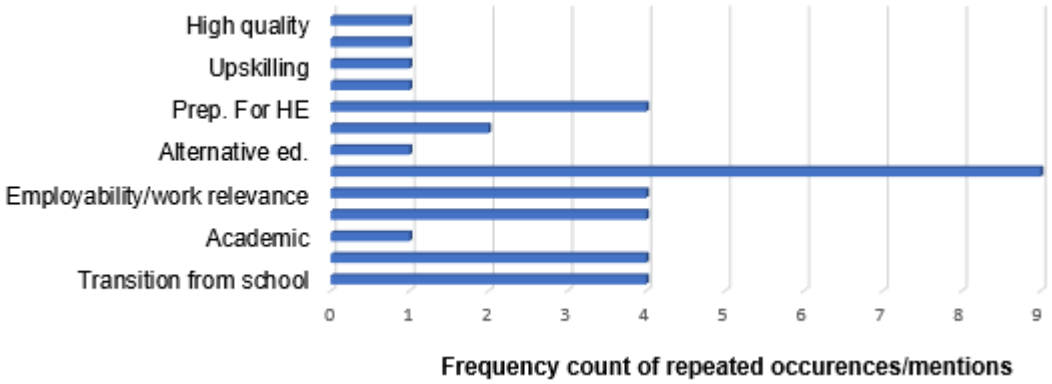


Figure 6 – Chart showing participant responses on defining further education

Literature acknowledges that FE's offering is expansive and has grown considerably, and with this so too has its reputation; both positively and negatively. As the majority of participants were QTs and NQTs it was anticipated that there would be some form of standardised response which was in line with policy and regulations; this was evident in the most popular

response of FE being identified as PCET (Post Compulsory Education and Training) (Appendix VII). Other definitions were fairly even in occurrence despite having considerably lower occurrences, with transition from school, specialist offer, academic offer, vocational offer, preparation for work/employability and preparation for HE each being individually mentioned four times. Interestingly there was only one occurrence of FE being defined as being a place where you learn something new, offering academic studies and of high quality. This does correlate with a high volume of literature which argues that FE is now associated with second chance education and of lower status compared to other education sectors such as schools and HE.

Question 4. Can you list the characteristics of a professional in general.

When asked to list the characteristics of a professional in general, only one participant did not respond. In total there were 48 different characteristics suggested (Appendix IX), with the most common characteristics equally listed as: being knowledgeable – intellectual, giving their best at all times including being motivated, proactive and hardworking, and being trustworthy – having integrity and being honest. If we compare this to Greenwood's (1957) indicators of a profession/professional (Table 11), there is a shared ethic of trustworthiness and giving your best, signifying that these behaviours that the participants identified strongly align with the characteristics of being a professional. The second most popular answer to question 4 was that a professional is ethical, again this has a strong association with a profession and professional behaviour; it is considered one of the foundational principles according to the specialist literature. The third most common answer was that a professional is a specialist – expert; this was in joint placing with being a good communicator. Being a specialist and expert is another foundational principle of a profession and being defined as a professional although being a good communicator does not readily align with Greenwood's (1957) normative account of being a professional; it aligns more closely with being an occupationalist.

What is interesting in the data for this particular question, is that professionalism in general is clearly identified by the participants in the

frequency of answers listing the core characteristics and traits of a professional which align to normative accounts. What is even more interesting is that there were 37 other separate suggestions for what characterises a professional, a significant lack of consensus in the data. Many of the answers linked to practical and emotional skills such as timekeeping, organised, supportive and team player which are more aligned to the characteristics of an occupationalist according to Greenwood (1957). Further support for FE teachers as occupationalists at this early stage, are suggested by what the data does not tell us. There are significant gaps in the responses for this particular question linked to normative accounts of professionalism advocated by Freidson (2004), Hoyle (1972) and Greenwood (1957). Extensive knowledge, education and qualifications are not evident in the data, having autonomy, authority and privilege are also missing. At this stage, there are also indications that FE teachers do not have a distinct culture and systems of behaviour; another indication of an occupation rather than a profession.

Characteristic/trait of professionals	**Characteristic/trait of a non-professional (occupationalist)**
Education and knowledge	
Extensive education	Education and training
Controls its own training and education	No control over training and education
Has systematic theory	Little systematic theory
Has a distinctive culture	Little/no culture
Controls its own accreditation – grants and withholds	Lack of control over its own accreditation
They have specialist knowledge and are absorbed in that area	General knowledge/little specialist knowledge
Power and control	
Has authority	Little/no authority
Hold power	Lack of power
Has privilege	Lack of privilege
Has control over entry – gatekeeping	Lack of control over entry
Immune from community judgement	Not immune from community judgement
Can apply community sanction	Little/no community sanction
Cannot withhold their services	Can choose to withhold their services
Behaviours	
Has ethical codes	No/few ethical codes
Provides a high calibre service	Service is variable
Has an ideal type	Lack of coherency on ideal type
Operates for social good – pay is secondary	Values pay
Weeds deviance out quickly	Deviance is not easily noticed

Rationality – critical attitude	Practical attitude
Has systems of behaviour - norms	Norms are not consistent – behaviour is not systematic
Is devoted	Not fully devoted
Cannot separate work and home life easily	Work and home life are distinctly separate
Answers a 'calling'	Carries out a role

Table 11. – Comparative table showing the characteristics of a profession and associated professional behaviours against the characteristics of an occupation and associated occupational behaviours based on Greenwood's (1957: 45-46) Professional Continuum.

Question 5. Can you define what a professional FE (college) teacher is?

Question 6. Please give your definition below. If you are unable to give a definition please add why this is not possible.

The majority of participants (76 per cent) were positive that they could define what a professional FE (college) teacher is (Appendix IX). The data mainly revealed that participants perceive professional FE teachers to be: educated, qualified, specialists and experienced. The majority of participants were also in agreement that FE teachers are altruistic; vocational educators who facilitate learning. Again, the data illustrates that FE teachers do have characteristics that align with characteristics of being a professional according to normative accounts within the literature, but there is a distinct absence of the term 'highly' when referring to these characteristics which aligns more closely with occupationalists. The 24 per cent of participants who stated that they could not define what a professional FE (college) teacher is, are of interest for further investigation. The majority who said they couldn't provide a definition consisted of QTs and NQTs. They offered shared reasons such as it is was difficult due to the ever changing government perspectives, organisational and societal demands which impacted on the role, and perceptions of FE teacher professionalism. They also said that FE teacher professionalism was difficult to locate within professions when compared to other professions where entry is guarded. This particular data from the QTs and NQTs support a rationale for exploring further these sets of participants as to how they shape their professional identities in a sector which is rapidly developing and growing.

Question 7. Please list what you think are the top three characteristics/

qualities of an FE teacher.

For this question, only one participant out of the 29 participants did not provide an answer. Again, there were a wide variety of answers which lacked cohesion suggesting the characteristics of an FE teacher are not broadly agreed (Appendix IX). Recurring themes are: being knowledgeable; passionate; honest; committed; and organised. Additionally, there is a distinct lack of references to key characteristics of a profession and associated professional characteristics such as being highly qualified and skilled, and there are no suggestions at all associated with power or control. This noticeable absence may support the literature and my personal experiences of having very little autonomy and control within the sector compared to other professions and education sectors, therefore indicating that it would not be an obvious response to suggest references to power in response to this question.

It is worth mentioning that when asked question 7, 39 characteristics and traits were suggested to be indicative of a professional FE teacher, with little repetition of suggestions; suggestions were broad and appeared to be highly individualised. The majority of suggestions were mainly behavioural, linking to personality characteristics rather than professional, and strongly aligned with occupational characteristics (referred to as practical attitude) and included terms such as patience, diligence, empathy and timekeeping. As a final note on this question, a point of interest arose in one suggestion which has so far not been mentioned, but is featured and promoted heavily in the ETF's professional framework; this suggestion was that a professional characteristic of FE teachers is that they are dual practitioners. In the FE landscape; dual, and now tri professionalism, appears to be the solution to addressing the ever-growing set of traits and characteristics associated with FE teachers' diverse roles by providing loose professional frameworks to which FE teachers may fit in more easily (Hodgson and Spours, 2013). Alternatively, frameworks for dual and tri professionalism could act to put FE teachers under further pressure due to the additional requirements; although in a deregulated sector there is no impetus to work towards them unless an employer requests it further distancing FE teachers away from being associated with being professionals.

Question 8. Are there any other characteristics that you feel a professional FE (college) teacher should have?

In answer to this question, a further 10 suggestions were given for characteristics (Appendix IX). The additional suggestions provided were inconsistent, mainly related to soft skills, and were behavioural such as having a sense of humour, being friendly and being practical; these align with occupational identifiers. Two interesting suggestions given, which align more so with professionalism constructs, were having control and being a risk taker; neither of these suggestions have been mentioned in the data up until now and there has also been a distinct lack of reference to any power attributes and characteristics associated with FE teachers throughout the questionnaire. In the position of an outsider looking in, it would appear that FE teachers suffer from an inconsistent and growing number of characteristics that their self-identity is constructed from. Alternatively, from an insider perspective and also from the data reviewed in question 5, in which some QTs and NQTs felt they couldn't define what a professional FE teacher is, perhaps the open ended list of characteristics, with no clear, adopted professional framework may be contributing to this loss of definition and supports further investigation.

Question 9. Please rate the status of FE Teachers compared to other types of teachers - 1 is the highest status and 6 is the lowest status.

The questionnaire asked participants what they perceived FE teachers' status to be when compared to other teachers working in the compulsory, higher and private education sectors. They were asked to rate their status between 1-6 (1 being the highest status and 6 being the lowest status) (Table 12). The majority of respondents rated FE teachers as having a medium status level (3), with only three QTs out of the 14 who answered rating FE teacher status as high. For NQTs there were mixed responses from the four participants, two participants rated FE teacher status as high, one medium and another with the lowest status. FE managers and the media representative also provided inconsistent responses which mainly put FE teacher status in the medium to bottom categories. Interestingly, parents and FE students rated FE teacher status as a 2, which is comparatively high. On first analysis it would appear

that those working within the sector rate FE teacher status far lower than those who participated from outside of the sector (students and parents of students who are studying within FE).

Status level	Status of FE teachers overall	Total counts per section
Highest 1	4	9
2	5	
3	7	11 Med status
4	4	
5	4	7
Lowest 6	3	

Table 12. – Perceived status levels of FE teachers.

When participants were asked to compare the status of FE teachers against the status of HE teachers, overall the data showed that FE teachers had a fairly high status when compared to their HE counterparts (46 per cent) (Table 13). This was also evident when compared to secondary school teachers (38 per cent), junior school teachers (42 per cent) and private school teachers (38 per cent); overall FE teacher status was not classed as low when compared to the majority of teachers within other sectors. This is surprising because FE is portrayed in the literature as the Cinderella sector and there is an associated low status of those that work within it; with FE teachers themselves feeling that they lack value compared to teachers in other sectors. One anomaly within the data was apparent when participants were asked to compare FE teacher status to the status of infant/nursery school teachers: the responses indicated that FE teacher status was lower than this particular type of teacher. This provides opportunities to discuss with participants further if there are any reasons for this finding as there is no significant literature that indicates FE teacher status is lower compared to nursery/infant school teachers.

Overall, FE teacher status when compared to other teachers was surprisingly positive with the majority of responses placing FE teachers in a middle to high status category. It is of interest to investigate further if this set of data and the literature align with the next two phases of the data collection as there appears to be an inconsistent picture emerging of FE teacher status from both insider

and outsider perspectives; a portrayal of FE teachers having a medium to high status despite literature arguing against this. At this stage of the data collection, the data was incongruent with what literature tells us about the low status of the FE sector and correspondingly those that work within it.

Status of FE teachers compared to...	HE teachers	Total counts per section	Secondary school teachers	Total counts per section	Junior school teachers	Total counts per section	Infant/ nursery school teachers	Total counts per section	Private school teachers	Total counts per section
Highest 1	4	12	6	10	4	11	5	10	6	11
2	8		4		7		5		5	
3	3	8	3	10	1	8	6	13	4	9
4	5		7		7		7		5	
5	5	7	3	7	3	6	2	4	6	7
Lowest 6	2		4		3		2		1	

Table 13. – Perceived status levels of FE teachers compared to teachers in other sectors.

10. Can you name anything that may influence the way FE Teachers act/carry out their roles?

Question 10 revealed that the organisations that FE teachers work in have a significant influence on the way FE teachers act and how they carry out their roles (fig. 7). Organisational influence was mentioned frequently by all participants under various guises; the main one being that there was pressure and inconsistency from managers, and a lack of support. The data indicated that expectations of FE teachers pointed to being unrealistic and this amplified pressures on FE teachers, particularly in regard to performativity linked to student achievement and having enough time to carry out their faceted roles. There were multiple references to *'pressure'* throughout this data set arising from multiple sources, both internal and external, which suggested a direct impact upon how FE teachers act and carry out their roles. This reflects the literature in respect of FE teacher roles encompassing an increasing level of responsibility and accountability; due to the steady widening of the role to incorporate areas outside of teaching specialisms, such as student pastoral care and a high element of administration linked to performative indicators. As a consequence of this, literature argues that FE teachers are experiencing an increasing difficulty in carrying out their day to day roles in a pressurised, performative environment where multiple stakeholders are facilitating

diversification of the role through their differing demands and expectations of FE teachers.

Also prevalent in the responses for this question was stakeholder influence. There were two specific stakeholders who were mentioned frequently: the government, and their associated bodies such as Ofsted, and students. The data suggests that these stakeholders are influential in how FE teachers approach their role and work, and consequentially they both possess elements of power and control over FE teachers. Less than favourable references to performativity, facilitated by the government and Ofsted, appear alongside narratives linked to mounting pressures on FE teachers. This is in conjunction with the low student abilities, and behaviour of the students taught by FE teachers, and the associated difficulties of trying to achieve impracticable targets.

Four other low scoring themes were also identified within the data: identity, financial influence, wellbeing and status/respect. Given that the literature places these themes as key features of the discourse surrounding the issues with FE teacher professionalism and professional standing, it is surprising that these themes were not mentioned more frequently within the responses which mainly came from FE teaching staff. In order to explore these responses in more detail, FE teachers were solely targeted in the next stages of the research as it was important for me to try and understand and provide a portrayal of why FE teachers act the way they do, and ascertain if their actions build or impede their professional identities.

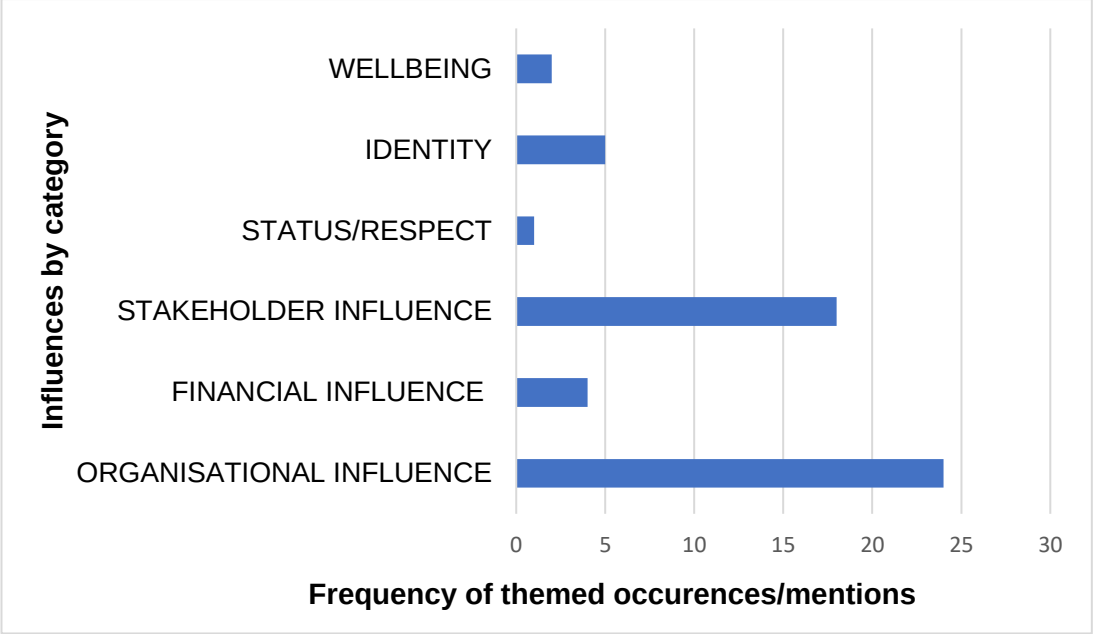


Figure 7 – Influences on FE teacher's work.

Question 11. Please tell me if there is anything that influences the way you view FE (college) teachers?

This question had the least engagement in the questionnaire (34 per cent), although the responses were rich in data (Appendix IX). As a reflexive researcher, this piqued interest in why there were less responses and acted as a driver to investigate more deeply FE teacher influences on their professional identities and their perceptions on the professionalism of other FE teachers through unstructured focus groups and interviews.

The main influences identified were connected to status/respect, altruism/commitment, organisational influence and stakeholder influence (fig. 8). Consequentially, the data points towards status and respect of FE teachers being affected by multiple stakeholders which fosters a sense of ambiguity in defining 'norms' for FE teacher professionalism. Sub themes linked to this were the lower salaries FE teachers receive compared to teachers in other educational sectors, high workloads, absence of reward and praise, and the lack of gatekeeping into the profession. All of these examples link directly to influences which are largely out of FE teachers control yet have an impact on their status and respect.

The responses also illustrate that FE teachers are viewed as altruistic and committed. The data suggests that this could be attributed to the long hours they work, difficult workloads they undertake, and the lack of reward in the role, which appear to contribute to FE teachers being perceived in a positive light by the questionnaire participants. In reviewing the status of participants for this particular question, the status of respondents was mixed. The narratives reflected their issues experienced at ground level: overworked and oppressed. An undercurrent of stakeholder interference was also present which signalled ramifications on FE teachers being able to carry out their roles effectively, and also indicated a negative effect on FE teacher status levels. These are evidenced in the examples below:

> *I feel the profession is increasingly undermined by decisions made at government level that are informed by an inadequate understanding of the sector and the needs of learners and teaching professionals at this level* (QT).
>
> *FE teachers I feel do not get the praise and acknowledgement that they deserve particularly from those that do not work in the sector themselves. FE teachers work extremely hard and have much to contend with in regards to organisational pressures and restraints in addition to government cut backs and funding in addition to the considerable workload and the variation of this* (QT).
>
> *I cannot help but notice that they all appear tired and worn out (just like the rest of the teaching profession!). This I would not know how to solve!* (NQT).

Themes which were not as frequently mentioned but are valuable in researching further are wellbeing, gatekeeping and identity. Within the literature these are a regular feature of discourse surrounding FE teacher professionalism, more so from a negative standpoint regarding the strain FE teachers are under, the lack of gatekeepers for entry into FE teaching, and the issues with having a clear professional identity within the sector when compared to other educational sectors. Concerning professional identity, an interesting aspect arose within the data, which upon reviewing the literature further, linked closely to the phenomenon of Impostor Syndrome. This 'syndrome', grounded in psychology, is linked to individual feelings of self-worth and adequacy, particularly when operating amongst others; these

feelings manifest themselves so that an individual questions their ability and knowledge, and negatively compares themselves to others without real justification; thus feeling like an Impostor (Clance, 2013: Bernard et al., 2002: Clance and Imes, 1978). The data collected from QTs and NQTs indicated that FE teachers were showing signs of Impostor Syndrome, particularly since de-professionalisation had taken place as a result of the Lingfield Report, and the involvement of multiple stakeholders in directing FE teachers' work. The disempowerment that arose from the substantial changes to entry into FE teaching and the increasing shift of power from FE teachers to multiple stakeholders, as a result of marketisation, appears to have had an impact on FE teacher status and clear professional identities within the sector.

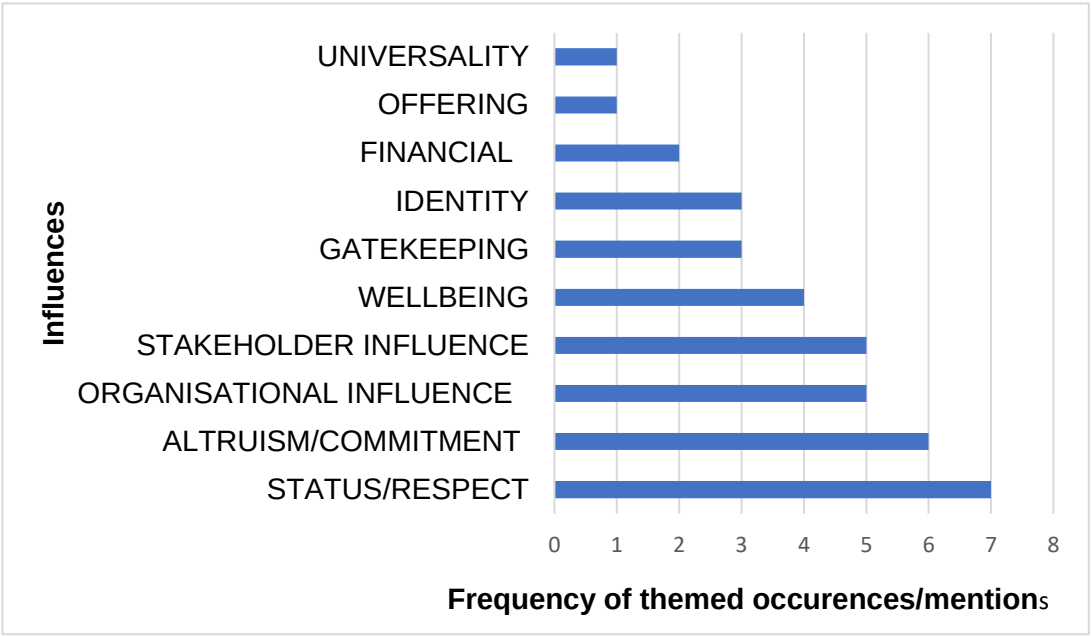


Figure 8 – Coded influences on the way FE teachers are viewed.

At this stage, the exploratory questionnaire and the review of the literature correlate: FE teachers suffer from internalised feelings of low self-worth and inadequacy; have high and unrealistic expectations of themselves; have a fear of failure; compare themselves to others, and have a fear of being discovered as a 'fake'. This may be further exacerbated when working as an FE teacher in a highly responsive and changeable sector. The data is starting to illustrate that to some extent FE teachers have an ambiguous professional identity which impacts on professional recognition and fear of being 'found out' by other

professionals or the public. Much of the discourse and literature surrounding FE teachers and their professionalism is characterised by complexity and the lack of clarity regarding what the term 'professionalism' is perceived to mean within the context of FE teaching; therefore it is plausible that there may be no clear definition of an FE teacher professional and this in itself may exacerbate feelings of 'Impostor Syndrome' in FE teachers.

After reviewing the content and quality of the data of the exploratory questionnaire, the decision was made to focus solely on FE teachers for the remaining data collection as their information from the exploratory questionnaire was meaningful, insightful, and provided a window into the complex phenomenon of FE teacher professional identities. As part of a sequential approach, the exploratory questionnaire supported the development of the next stage of data collection with FE teachers; focus groups, and then onto individual interviews in order to gain deeper personalised narratives and perspectives.

The findings for the remaining data collection are presented under three themed headings with the data combined: focus groups one and two, and interviews. It is structured this way for clarity and facilitates effective presentation of the data by grouping thematic responses from all participants. Throughout the data there were consistent responses from all groups of participants which provides a strong rationale for presenting the data in this combined format. The main three themes listed below, which developed from the coding process, provide an outline of the headline data which is later explored, analysed and expanded in the discussion chapter using thematic analysis (Table 10). These three themes were consistent throughout all stages of data collection and provided strong links to the literature and policy contexts; they will be brought together in the discussion chapter to form three subsequent themes: Is FE teaching a profession? What is FE teacher professional identity?, and How do FE teachers think and act professionally?

<table>
<tr><th>Themes used for structuring the Findings chapter</th><th colspan="2">Second cycle coding</th></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="5">The defined characteristics of a professional</td><td colspan="2">1. Media influence and portrayal of the sector and FE teachers</td></tr>
<tr><td>2. The defined characteristics of a professional (macro)</td><td rowspan="2">2 & 3 combined to create: Professional characteristics and traits</td></tr>
<tr><td>3. The defined characteristics of a professional (micro)</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">9. Unprofessional behaviour</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">10. The distribution of power and control within professions</td></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="3">Influences on forming professional identities</td><td colspan="2">4. The formation of professional identities within the sector</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">5. The role of gatekeeping in Professions</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">7. The levels of status and respect within the sector</td></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="2">Defining professionalism in the sector</td><td colspan="2">6. Can FE teaching be identified as a profession or an occupation?</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">8. Defining professionalism in the Sector</td></tr>
</table>

Table 14. – Findings themes for presentation of main data.

4.2.0 Main Data Findings

4.2.1 Professional Characteristics and Traits

The NQT group clearly identify that a professional is defined by a set of characteristics that broadly fit into the frameworks and normative accounts of both a profession and occupation combined; they do not state this explicitly though, and instead provide suggestions and lists of traits and characteristics which they associate with being a professional (Table 5). These traits and characteristics are extensive and build a complex list, which is not easily generalised. Rather than link the characteristics and traits to a profession, they instead associate them with acting professionally and suggest that this behaviour is a form of mindset; a way of doing things. Carol (NQT) explains, *'professionalism is about what you do in practice and how good you are at what you do'*, further arguing that any role can exhibit and enact professionalism if they possess the right characteristics.

The QTs also agree that a professional is defined by a set of characteristics although they are based upon personal perceptions of what individuals think they should be and can be inconsistent. One area they do agree on as a group is that FE professionalism has foundations in caring about what they do and the students are a priority. They believe that the pastoral element is one of the largest and most influential areas of their work outside of face-to-face teaching. Interestingly, being knowledgeable is only identified by one of the group as an important part of being considered a professional.

The focus group participants identify that having specialist knowledge, qualifications, resilience, and a length of service (experience) are considered hallmarks of professionalism; this is alongside being highly reflective. Linked to knowledge and qualifications is the term 'authoritative voice' which participants have dual perceptions of in terms of the professional *'always know[ing] best'* (Valerie NQT) and alternatively the act of being in charge; throughout the data they use these terms interchangeably despite them both meaning different things.

The interviewees offer suggestions on what characterises a professional and these are fairly inconsistent. Alan (QT) believes that one of the main characteristics of a professional is to be a role model and have specialist knowledge, he reinforces this several times and is supported by Ella, Robert and Mike (QTs). Mike (QT) adds to this that the specialist knowledge does not necessarily have to come from an academic background and offers that it could be practical based or theory based, *'it's just having a wide knowledge in a specific area'*. Alan (QT) also feels that dedication is a key behaviour in being a professional and that the professional behaviours teachers enact are inherent and adopted as part of the 'culture of being a teacher'. Previously Ella (QT) stated that professionalism is very hard to define and she adds to this in saying that professionals are characterised by just *'doing, and being it'*; she finds this hard to explain but says that it just happens as part of being an FE teacher. Kris (QT) believes that a professional is characterised by upholding their values and beliefs, and is in the minority with Mike compared

to rest of the interviewees in not providing any characteristics in particular which are associated with professional behaviours.

4.2.2 The Importance of Being Qualified and Engaging with CPD

Being qualified resonates highly with the NQT group although there is some reticence due to being 'forced' into studying for the PGCE as part of the government regulations which are now defunct. They argue that being qualified usually determines whether they will chose an individual to carry out work or provide a service, citing examples of doctors and nurses who could not practice without being qualified as it acts as a quality mark. Martin (NQT) argues that if *'you go against somebody (unqualified), you'd have the best chance'*; qualifications make a difference with Mike (NQT) also arguing that *'that piece of paper represents a lot to a lot of people, that's the only reason really, I want the piece of paper',* illustrating the high significance they perceive the public and their peers hold over individuals having qualifications. Although Andy (NQT) does believe in being qualified to some extent, he suggests that being qualified does not necessarily make you more professional to which most of the group agree; both Carol and Martin (NQTs) state that getting the PGCE does not come with an automatic change in behaviour to acting professionally, *'it's immaterial (the certificate)', 'we're still doing it (being professional)'*.

The QTs also agree that qualifications do matter in any role and they act as a benchmark to determine an individual's capability and competence, reflecting the recent literature and specialist media coverage of the negative effects of deregulation of the sector. The group show an uncomfortableness regarding the fact that within their organisation there are teaching staff who are unqualified and are not looking to undertake any teacher training in light of deregulation. Kris (QT) states that as a minimum FE teachers should *'have at least the level that they are teaching, if not more'*, Robert (QT) too argues that if you are unqualified, *'why would I listen to you?'*; signalling that being unqualified is not ideal and this may have repercussions on status and respect within the sector. An opposing view is offered by Ella (QT) who questions the relevance of the PGCE in today's context. Ella believes that the emphasis on

the PGCE being the gold standard for teaching may be misconstrued and the qualification may not prepare you adequately for the practical part of the role:

> *I think sometimes the PGCE perhaps is a little bit more than what some FE teachers might need… Preparing to Teach in the Lifelong Learning Sector (PTLLS), I think that is the basic that anybody need to actually teach a lesson and to understand how objectives need to be met and things like. I'm not entirely sure whether every single FE teacher needs the PGCE. I know from personal experience that some of the assignments that we did on the PGCE were interesting and it gave you a better knowledge of how education is formed through curriculum change and things like that. But in terms of actual in practice teaching, not sure it helps on the floor in the classroom with the students.*

In the current climate of deregulation where there is no mandatory requirement for CPD, it is still held in high regard by the majority of participants. The participants believe that CPD is still important and engaging with it makes you more professional, or appear to be more professional, as it shows a commitment to betterment in professional practice. Ella (QT) argues that CPD *'perhaps should be something that we are made to do'*. Cameron (NQT) agrees, stating:

> *It's one of the core things of it (professionalism). If you're just willing to just settle, I mean we all know teachers that don't learn new techniques, don't update their skills. I wouldn't class them as professional because they're not updating themselves, they're just riding it out for the pay check until retirement*.

Carol (NQT) is of the same opinion *'I think there's still lots more to learn and as a professional, I need to shift to come out of that comfort zone and do something fresh and different and I think that's dead important'*. Alan (QT) feels that CPD is imperative in him improving his teaching and learning and sees a tenuous link between this self-development and making him more professional. He views not keeping up to date as being *'not very professional'*. Kris (QT) reflects that once qualifications are achieved then this should just be the start, not the end of CPD; *'I don't just think, "Actually I've done my qualifications and that's it". I look for further development as a professional'*. One of the main reasons she gives for this is that you need to be abreast of current and emerging trends and not remain stagnant in your practice:

Every day is different and I think as a college lecturer, we are seen as continual developers really. You know, we all have to develop our own practice. We can't say, "I did my qualification 12 years ago, 15 years ago, that's it, I don't have to do anymore".

4.2.3 The Role of Experience

For many of the interviewees, professionalism appears to be based more upon experience, which can encompass qualifications, and exposure to the situational contexts on a prolonged basis. Industry is again referenced as an important feeder into employment as an FE teacher and the interviewees identify that this background may be more beneficial than a pure academic background when working within the sector. This is exemplified by Ella (QT):

> *If somebody comes into teaching with a 30 years' experience of working on a building site, then surely that's better than a few qualifications that have tested them once or twice on few different things because they've been working at it for 30 years. In my experience, qualifications are obviously essential to a professional but I think experience is the more valuable asset.*

Ella (QT) also provides an example where this has worked in practice based on her own experience:

> *One of my degree tutors didn't have his degree while he was teaching us but he'd worked in industry for 30 years. From what he was actually teaching us, we got more knowledge and more support and what we needed to know. To me he was a better teacher than one of the other teachers that did have a PGCE and did have teaching experience. I got more from the less qualified lecturer.*

Mike (QT) supports this as he feels that if you are from industry then you gain 'experience as you learn'; this is in reference to teaching experience which you build as you do the job. Robert (QT) also supports this and agrees that you can learn as you teach due to having a 'world of experience' and training from the trade or subject area you are teaching; qualifications then serve to bolster this and provide additional credibility.

Within the discussion there is a small section where the requirement for experience, in order to be defined as a professional, is questioned by some of the participants. A justifiable reason for this is provided by Cameron (NQT)

who states that if it is something new then you start with no experience. This is further supported by Valerie (QT) who asks other participants, *'what did you have when you entered the profession, you didn't have any experience in teaching kids, did you?'*; and although many of the group agree that this is a valid point, they revert back to drawing on life experience as a tool to build experience in other areas upon and having a *'natural ability'* (Valerie NQT). Many of the NQTs have been teaching unqualified for a number of years so there is a diverse range of responses regarding experience versus qualifications, the group agree that a mixture of both is beneficial but this will change as a result of deregulation. The rationale for hands on experience and modelling behaviour, which many of the participants carried out prior to studying the PGCE as unqualified teachers, leads the group to believe that for some of them this route has not done them a disservice in any way; it has enhanced their studies and practice. What is acknowledged by them though, is that their status is elevated by being qualified; they believe they are seen as professionals.

4.2.4 Altruism in FE Teaching Practice

One of the focus group participants said that they felt a significant characteristic of a professional is that they are caring; this is also acknowledged and agreed with as part of being a professional in FE by the rest of the group and is a feature across all data sets. Authority is questioned as being a negative characteristic of professionalism and an area which the group feel they would struggle to carry out in their positions as nurturers; this is in terms of being controlling and directing. Being the authoritative voice and being in charge is one of the key characteristics from normative accounts of a professional, yet there is a noticeable absence of FE teachers demonstrating these characteristics throughout the data; in the mainstay participants reflect on the lack of them. The caring element of being a professional is mentioned extensively by Mike (NQT), particularly pastoral care. This characteristic he views as being detrimental in many ways to the profession as he feels that all the *'little bits'* have to be addressed *'before the learner can learn'*. He is worried about how this is linked to performance and says, *'I don't know if I can make everybody happy all the time'*. In respect of the pastoral care he is

involved with, he argues that being ‘Mr nice guy’ in his role is not always effective and recognises that this characteristic is not conducive to being a professional. He suggests that if he was harsher, and in his opinion more professional for doing so, then that might yield better results in the long term; this in terms of student achievement as he views a true professional characteristic as being firm and guiding. Despite being proud of being a teacher who provides solid pastoral care, there is a real disjoint in Mike’s view of what a major professional characteristic should be and what it actually is in action.

Sally (QT) describes her perspective on caring about her role, which she believes makes her more professional:

> *Some people just come in, and go. So they come in at 8:30, they leave at 5 o’clock that's it. Whereas I think a lot of us not just take our work home in the sense of marking, but take home the students problems you know, and think how can I solve that problem for that student?*

The rest of the group agree that you have to care if you are an FE teacher, and they naturally worry about the students as if they were *‘their own children*’ (Carol NQT); they believe this behaviour is encouraged by the intensive focus on pastoral care that FE teachers have to provide as part of ensuring that students achieve. Mel (QT) evidences this as a recognised part of the role; pastoral and performative behaviours rolled into one, *‘you will always have the ones that just need that little bit of an extra push over the finish line and they're the ones we always eligibly focus on. Get as many of them across that line as you can’*. They do indicate their aspiration to become more authoritative, in regards to their work but in a less commanding way, by suggesting if *‘you know what you want, know what you can do, and know your remit’* (Carol NQT); this, they believe, enhances professionalism. This is associated with still being caring but having an authoritative stance by communicating their boundaries to all stakeholders through assertion.

Ethical behaviour is also mentioned as a key component in acting professionally and linked to caring aspects of the role, associated within the data with doing the right thing and self-policing. The QTs state that there is a wide range of behaviour within the sector, displayed by teaching staff, that is

not congruent with ethical behaviour, yet question why there are no reprisals for this. Examples are given of being unethical such as: swearing/shouting in front of, and at, the students; not supporting, encouraging or motivating students; and acting unprofessionally outside of work.

Being passionate is identified as another caring characteristic by the NQTs; passion is linked to loving the role and embracing it completely. Andy (NQT) states that your *'effort and your enthusiasm'* make you do the job to which Valerie (NQT) adds that you have to have *'a love for it'*, and Kris (QT) suggests *'I think as a professional, their heart and soul has to be in that organisation, workplace, job, anything at all*'; here the group are indicating that not everyone has it in them to be a teacher, particularly relevant as there is a high attrition rate within the sector linked to NQTs in their first of teaching (NEU, 2018: ATL, 2015). Mike (NQT) attributes this to *'the other side of the coin'*; the unseen parts of the role that are not evident at the start. He says that you just have to *'do your damn best'* and face all the *'issues'* even though it is *'tiring'* and *'quite negative'*.

Linked to being passionate is the suggestion that ultimate adaptability and flexibility is required as a teaching professional; this is not surprising due to the changeability of the sector, and the frequency of this occurring. Mike (NQT) shows his vulnerability in this area, *'you're supposed to know how to do things, and something will change, but you're supposed to know how to do it'.* Carol (NQT) picks up on this by stating that being adaptable is a hallmark of a professional teacher; *'you're adapting to your learners… you're adapting to the right social elements, the right cultural elements to be able to make that classroom work and your students work'*. She associates her adaptability and flexibility with the *'boundary of professionalism that you sit in… do[ing] exactly the right thing at the right time'*; this she believes singles her out as a professional. There is acknowledgement that the role involves many additional roles and tasks which involve working hard at all times, Alan (QT) states that working hard is an *'expectation of the job'* and says that you have to be prepared for the unexpected which relies heavily on being adaptable and flexible. Mike (NQT) supports this in his reflection on the job:

> Y*ou have to put a lot of time and effort in. I would say that your best is sometimes not enough, and you can't be put off by that, you just have to know that that's what happens… you just have to deal with as it hits you in the face'*.

Thus painting a somewhat undervalued position when it is clear that many of the participants are trying their hardest.

4.3.0 Influences on Forming Professional Identities

The data provides insights into how professional identities are shaped, mainly through working situation/context and individual personal beliefs and values. There are strong views about alignment of personal beliefs and values with normative behaviours of others within the workplace. In the absence of universal clear direction of professional behaviours for FE teachers, in addition to core values, the teachers themselves appear to shape their professional identities on their past experiences of teachers, organisational messages, and how they think teachers should behave based upon their exposure to workplace behaviours of other teachers. Andy (NQT) provides a rationale for how this works in practice as you embed yourself within a role:

> *You can have some core values and your business or organisation can have some values which you choose to adhere to. The same within your personal life, you choose to adhere to set values and beliefs that you've got which make you the person you are. I think you've got a choice in it because your values and the core values of the organisations you work in don't necessarily change but yours do as you grow and develop and change*.

An interesting aspect regarding core values is that they appear to be changeable from the point of entering FE teaching and gaining experience in the sector, particularly when compared to what the participants see as fixed core values and behaviours in other professions such as medicine and law. Participants contextualise their moveable and changeable core values as a feature of working within this particular sector and clearly identify that professional identities in other professions are more easy to define due to fixed and accepted normative accounts which feature a set of standardised characteristics, traits and behaviours; an aspect of FE teachers' professional identity which is unclear based upon the role being multi-faceted according to the data. The diverse nature of the students within FE is also offered as an

explanation as to why core values and beliefs are not fixed. Being adaptable in outlook and approach is viewed as being extremely professional and this is an expectation of working within the sector: professional adaptability.

Being a positive role model is mentioned as a characteristic of a professional, although role models outside of teaching are heavily criticised particularly sports people. Andy (NQT) identifies that the media do play a part in determining professional and unprofessional behaviour by being selective in what they chose to report on, and for this reason professionalism/unprofession - alism in many roles is more evident than others. He provides the following example: *'take footballers for example, deemed as professionals, role models to thousands and thousands of kids, is their behaviour you see in the news ever really any good?'* Hayley (NQT) offers an alternative view on this:

> *Is that the difference though between a professional and a role model, because teachers might see themselves as professionals but I'm sure a lot of students wouldn't see a teacher as a role model as opposed to a sporting star. So, where do you draw the line between being professional and a role model?*

Hayley (NQT) rightly challenges that it is difficult to separate the two and indicates that the role modelling and professionalism could be more situational and contextual rather than be a case of generalised labelling. Tied in with role modelling is being an inspiration to others, someone that others can aspire to be like. Heidi (NQT) believes that being inspiring is a characteristic of being professional, which is underpinned by Kris's reflection on her own professional practice; *'how can I teach and inspire others if I'm just part of the norm?'*

4.3.1 Professional Ethics

Morality and ethical behaviour are key aspects of being an FE teaching professional according to the QT data; this is facilitated through the creation and preservation of boundaries. Participants link strong boundaries with clear professional identities, in terms of what is projected clearly from an individual, is also understood clearly from the receiver. Whether the receiver wishes to align with these boundaries is entirely optional and is a point of contention within the narratives. The participants regularly debate the impact of boundaries on their, and their perception of others' professional identities when

they are clearly set out, or are obviously absent. The following summary from Anna (QT) illustrates the complexities of inconsistent boundaries in how she views professionalism amongst her colleagues:

> *I think that's being professional, knowing boundaries, because I've come across people who literally don't have professional boundaries, and then that makes me question their professionalism on whether or not they should be considered professionals. From the stories I'm being told by learners and other members of staff, I do not consider them to be professional because they don't meet what it is, I suppose, in my head*.

In this particular area the participants conclude that professional identity is subjective as it is based upon personal behaviour in the absence of clear, and mandatory, professional behaviours for FE teaching staff. Kris (QT) states, *'it's things that I am and things that I hope I am'*. There is a continuous cycle of discussion which consists of participants agreeing that their professional identities are formed from their personal identities, of which these consist of differing beliefs, values and behaviours, and have significant cross over. As FE teaching staff work within organisations they are exposed to varying normative behaviours which they choose to deem as professional or unprofessional, they then adopt, ignore, or adapt those behaviours and construct/deconstruct their professional identities accordingly; no one view of professional identity is the same and is defined by the participants as *'personal professionalism'*. This process is cyclical as they build and rebuild their identities, both personally and professionally based upon stakeholder and organisational influence.

As a teacher in general, interviewees agree that you are categorised as having to be a positive role model and your behaviour should be adjusted to reflect this both in and out of the workplace, although many concede that this is not consistent behaviour amongst their colleagues. They all recognise that in their roles they are targets for being judged and investigated through various routes, and by individuals which extend far beyond the organisations they work in such as the general public. One participant talks of adjustment of personal and professional behaviour as *'common sense'* in order to protect oneself as the role of a teacher attracts criticism and judgement, particularly in the 'reactive'

FE sector. This is an area where self-imposed policing of personal behaviour is evident to avoid damage to their professional image as teachers and possible sanctions from employers. The interviewees agree that as teachers, if they acted as their natural selves, then this would not be in alignment with the behavioural expectations of a teacher from an insider and outsider perspective.

Unprofessional behaviours appear to be mainly linked to personal behaviours in and out of work according to the data. The NQT group previously discussed in depth how behaviours at work should also be applied outside of the workplace as stakeholders have an expectation of teacher behaviours both professionally and personally; these expectations transcend the organisations they work for and FE teachers appear to be moderating their personal behaviours for fear of any repercussions or reprisals at work. Hayley (NQT) frames this in the following narrative: *'everything's got to be private… I don't want them (students) to try and mix my professional life with my personal life and see what I'm getting up to and things like that'.* In response, Martin (NQT) feels that this is a *'sad state of affairs'* that you have to protect yourself because your personal life may impact upon your professional life to which Carol (NQT) concedes that as a teacher her conduct has definitely changed. Interestingly, the focus group QTs provided minimal input regarding unprofessional behaviour, apart from the fact that they work with a number of staff who have no professional boundaries, and there appears to be no repercussions regarding this; this annoys them greatly when they work so hard to be professional and comply with organisational standards.

Group values, beliefs and standards are also mentioned in the interviews as being a key factor in being able to identify unprofessionalism. Accepted norms are identified as being difficult to standardise within the sector due to the varied nature of the teachers employed in FE: industry backgrounds, academic backgrounds or a combination of both. To this effect some of the participants state that this is why unprofessional behaviours thrive and go unchecked, and also there appears to be a lack of consequences when compared to other professions. Another enabler they identify in supporting unprofessional

behaviour in FE teachers, is the lack of consequences for staff if they behave unprofessionally; particularly as they work and move between organisations. This is evident in Mike's (NQT) following statement, *'I could say whatever I wanted and it would have no effect. Obviously I might get a warning or whatever, but I could still go and teach somewhere else'.* Ella (QT) does warn though that any unprofessionalism that brings your employer or yourself into disrepute is certain to have some level of consequences attached, even though they may be minimal.

It would appear from the data that unprofessional behaviour is far easier to define and identify than professional behaviour; the participants agree that this is more easily recognised and there are commonalities for the identification of unprofessional behaviours which overarch almost any profession such as not abiding by employer rules and standards. For many of the participants, they appear to be identifying unprofessional behaviours, in order to benchmark levels of professionalism. Len (NQT) typifies this in the following statement, *'we all have an idea of what unprofessional is so that helps us decide what professional is'.* Hayley (NQT) also supports this perspective of professionalism being identified and measured through the initial lens of unprofessional behaviour, *'you look at unprofessional* [behaviours] *because that's unprofessionalism before you get to professionalism, that's exactly what I did… I think altogether what is unprofessional to then get to the professional'.* In terms of acting unprofessionally, the participants agree that all professionals have the capacity to behave in this way, such as not being committed to the role and bringing the profession into disrepute, and that unprofessionalism is not limited to any profession in particular although they do feel that teachers are a target for identification of unprofessionalism through various routes such as the media. Carol (NQT) associates this with the media having a widespread voice which enables them to be able to reveal *'chinks in the armour of perceived professionals (FE teachers), because the media is so involved in seeing everything'.*

Data from the interviewees also illustrates that they view unprofessionalism as being very easy to identify compared to professionalism. Alan (QT) asks,

'where do you draw the line? There's lots of things you say that aren't professional. I could list a lot of things'. He also adds that identifying unprofessionalism is dependent on whose lens the behaviour is being viewed through and the context or situation you are in at the time. Ella (QT) also holds the same point of view, *'it's dependent upon where I am. Sometimes I think I don't necessarily conduct myself as a professional'.* She confirms what some of the other interviewees have agreed on, in that it is probably easier to define professionalism by viewing it through the lens of unprofessional behaviours ie: when you observe what is not professionally acceptable then you can identify what being professional is more clearly.

Behaviours inside and outside of the workplace are a key focus within the narrative. The tightly woven threads of professional and personal behaviour appear to be difficult to separate for the participants and they evidence that they sustain their teacher identities and behaviours whilst out of the workplace and suppress their personal identities within the workplace. In terms of behaviour for FE teachers the interviewees identify that there is a fusion of professional and personal behaviour which extends outside of the workplace, Alan (QT) equates this to having a '*standard persona*' that transcends his own personality. Kris (QT) adds depth to this by saying that she hopes she is *'seen as a professional'* and hopes that she *'comes across as professional'* as she feels that this adds value to everything she does. This persona consists of a small piece of her personal identity and a large piece of her constructed professional identity; this is also reflected by other interviewees and is consistent with focus group data relating to acting within the role and portrayal of a professional.

Some do allow part of themselves to be revealed but are fearful of repercussions from staff and students if they act naturally; this is due to their natural behaviour not being in alignment of how the organisation, peers and students expect FE teachers to behave as role models and providers of a service. Anna (QT) illustrates this point well, *'I've found a real schism has opened up in my head between what I'm being paid to do and what I'm being judged on'*; clear evidence that expectations of behaviours are a key feature in

how FE teachers operate in practice. Sally (QT) states that she was determined to *'just do my job and come home'* but this has not transpired and the group agree that as a professional FE teacher, the two cannot be easily separated.

There is a fusion of professional and personal identities for many of the teachers and for some there are difficulties in separating work life and home life; there is no clear delineation for many and it is agreed that the role carries with it a high emotional investment and this may affect levels of professionalism. There is much discussion on professional behaviour and personal behaviour, and how professional identity of FE teachers is perceived by outsiders of FE teaching, mainly through observations of FE teacher behaviours in the workplace and how they transfer to out of the workplace. The participants reflected on their past thoughts about their teachers from they were at school and agreed that they could not visualise them outside of their working environment to the extent of them being considered *'not human'* and being *'star struck'* if they were seen outside of the school environment. The participants felt that in addition to acting at work, in order to portray being a professional, they also act outside of work in order to try and maintain their professional identities. They suggest that because they have to modify their behaviour in and out of work, this does not reflect on who they truly are as individuals. From carrying out daily activities such as shopping, to going out and socialising, participants are clear that they continue to act outside of their natural behaviour in order to maintain their professional identities and be perceived as professionals despite not being at work. Hayley (NQT) clearly evidences this behaviour when she describes how conscientious she is about her professional behaviour:

> *I have to be very conscious about how professional I am with it and often, especially some of us round the table, we go out and I can see my personal life again and we'll be at the same establishments that they'll be in (students). Again, It does knock onto your personal life and you think, 'oh, I'd better be careful what I'm doing' because this could go back and get reported, and it can affect your personal life and your professional life which I've found are very blurred for me at the moment.*

The participants find it very hard to switch off to the extent that they try to maintain their professional demeanours at home as evidenced by Valerie (NQT), *'I'll say to my husband, that was inappropriate… how do you switch off from that when you class yourself as that? (professional)'* to which Hayley (NQT) suggests that if you do then you *'risk losing your professionalism'*. Various reasons are given for extended behaviour outside of the workplace such as organisations communicating standards of behaviour inside and outside of the workplace, due to the individual being a representative of the organisation as a whole. Another reason provided for modifying behaviour is that certain professions require you to be constantly vigilant of how you are perceived, and teaching is one of those professions where you have to be careful and protect your professional identity; according to the data this is in comparison to the care taken by those in law and medicine in protecting and guarding their professional identities from harm. Carol (NQT) describes how she feels pressured when she is outside of her working environment and is vigilant of students recognising her:

> *So my social attitudes have definitely altered, and like you say, when you go out, even shopping, you're aware of "alright miss". I'm in the supermarket waiting at the opticians and I hear, "alright miss, how you doing?" I didn't feel intimidated but I sort of sat up a bit, it did alter me. I sat straight up right away and I was thinking this at the time, "God Carol straight away you switched that on" and it's really bizarre you walk into the front door and you switch it back on, and you switch it back off when you get home but not all the time.*

Cameron (NQT) agrees and attaches high importance to your outward facing identity, *'it's about what you portray and what you show'*, so too does Valerie (NQT) stating, *'I have to act in that particular way'*. Martin (NQT) finds the whole situation of having to be professional outside of work *'odd'* and states that he does not understand why students think that teachers are not allowed to do the things that students themselves do. The participants concede that the whole subject of how you act and behave professionally in and out of work is highly subjective and individualised, from both an insider and outsider perspective, therefore there will always be disjoint in standardised professional identities for FE teachers and the behaviours which correspond with them.

One of the main areas the participants feel professional behaviour is compromised and misinterpreted as being unprofessional is when they are having fun, particularly if in public. Another suggestion is the use of social media, which Hayley (NQT) advises that you have to be very careful with. General enjoyment at work is also questioned as being unprofessional, particularly in front of the students; *'I can't walk into a classroom laughing and joking and having a good old time. That's not being a professional, you can't go round running and laughing and joking'* (Carol NQT). The NQT group agree that there's an association between regulating behaviour and being viewed as a professional rather than just being themselves in the workplace. Carol (NQT) believes this behaviour is associated with where you work and what your role is, citing working in a canteen as an example. The professional behaviours associated with that role she states are *'much more looser compared to the bigger institutions we're all, you know, we're all absolved by'*; the group believe this to be true and add that the many rules, standards and codes of conduct that exist within their organisations make you act professionally.

The participants appear to be critical of their own practice but align this to being reflective practitioners; another sign of professionalism that they indicate defines teachers as professionals, *'every person should be self-reflecting, that's one of the things that makes you a professional, because you want to get better at what you're doing'* (Cameron NQT). Terry (NQT) states that as FE teachers *'we're always self-reflecting thinking was that lesson any good? What could I have done differently?'* Cameron (NQT) agrees, *'yeah, that was rubbish, what can I do different next time?'* and Hayley adds *'it's good to self-reflect, it's good to be observed and things like that but it's finding that fine line that then doesn't demotivate you and then stops you from being the professional that you want to be'*; their reflections illustrate that despite being objects of criticism and review through performative measures, FE teachers too are their own harshest critics. Mike (NQT) states that you *'just have to take criticism and feedback on the chin and just push it off and move on because you can't stop and think. You can't reflect too much, because you wouldn't get out of bed'* with Hayley (NQT) agreeing:

> *I think that sometimes you can reflect far too much or you can be told you need to change this far too much, because I know at the minute that I can certainly feel that I can't do anything right at the minute as a professional and then I think that that can demotivate you and you can go into lessons thinking that I can't really be bothered with this now. I've been made to feel like I'm not doing anything right and then I think that then can lead to de-professionalism.*

As a final observation, Robert (QT) says that reflection, despite being stressful, acts as an indicator of quality and states that in the climate of students as consumers it is imperative that their feedback is sought on their teaching and learning experiences. He goes further adding, that as part of a community of practice *'are the members of staff happy with what I'm teaching for self-evaluation and improvement?* Carmel (NQT) provides this final insight, *'how you perceive yourself as being a professional does not necessarily mean that others are seeing you as being professional'* which the group agrees is a truism when judging levels of professionalism in individuals.

4.3.2 Organisational Influence

Colleagues within the workplace feature heavily within the data as sources of professional role modelling and communication of normative behaviours for FE teachers. A sense of professionalism can be influenced by those you work with through role modelling, feedback, and observation of behaviours and practice within FE and other education sectors such as schools and universities. Role modelling and behaviour are mentioned as being both positive and negative in terms of actions and behaviours which Ella (QT) supports with her account of influential behaviours in the workplace, *'you sort of pick up from the way a workplace is by the people that work there and what's expected. The way that they treat you is the way obviously you reciprocate that'*.

Hayley (NQT) argues that professional identity is *'ultimately your input as well as someone else's input that makes you a professional'*; indicating that identity is influenced by other factors. Carol (NQT) talks about a *'professional gauge'* which is used within her organisation based upon student success and failure within departments. This gauge is then used by managers to assess levels of

professionalism; if a department is not doing well then professional behaviours are assessed and staff are reminded of professional conduct and ways of working as a result. Ella (QT) elaborates on how normative behaviours are adopted within the workplace and provides an insight into the influences and pressures which affect how we act professionally:

> *If you join a new team, they are all sat around in jeans, drinking coffee, eating food at the desks and then you are going to more than likely end up kind of fitting in with that if you like, because that's what you see around you. Whereas if you're sat in an office where everybody's all working very ethically and very professionally, you are more likely to behave in that way. It's conformity at the end of the day, isn't it? You fit in with the things around you.*

Interestingly, Mike (NQT) provides an alternative perspective on the adoption of professional identity, in that if you are classed as a professional, is there an expectation that you already know how to behave? He suggests that provision of the title does not necessarily indicate that the correct behaviours are established in an individual and perhaps provides evidence of why there are differing accounts of what it is to be a professional and how to behave. Mike (NQT) is not alone in thinking this way, Robert (QT) too states that there are assumptions connected with working in certain roles, teaching is one of them. The assumptions he discusses are that if you work in a profession then you automatically behave professionally, or at least try to. He aligns teaching in the same professional category as law and medicine who have their own sets of standards and values which must be adhered to, although he does concede that professions have their own versions of professionalism and they become personalised by the individual. As a final reflection he asks the profound question of *'why do we have to be different? Especially education'*, recognising that teaching may not belong in the same professional category as law and medicine as he first thought. Robert (QT) suggests that FE teachers are not recognised as professionals at all and he wants to be recognised in the same way that other professions are recognised, he asks *'why can't we be the same?'* and states that he feels *'lower than the rest'*.

Within these ways of working and adoption of normative behaviours also sits the element of professional critique. It is clear from the data that FE teachers

and stakeholders are reflective and critical of individual professional practice. In terms of FE teachers critiquing other FE teachers, for this area in particular, FE teachers are highly critical of themselves and of their peers and can identify unprofessional behaviour very easily. The data illustrates that what you should *not* be doing as a professional is clearly defined, but for FE teachers what you *should* be doing as a professional is unclear.

Management also play a pivotal role in sending out messages on how professional teachers should act and behave, alongside those that are perceived to be leaders in acting professionally such as those who work in educational enhancement and development. In support of this, Mike (NQT) gives an example of members of the staff development team as being *'good examples'* of staff acting professionally and working with others to develop their professionalism, although Robert concedes that you need to be seen to be professional both inside and outside of work in order to preserve your professional identity and standing. He states that this in itself is *'very tiring'*, having to maintain a professional composure both at work and in private and explains how hard it is in repressing your emotions, instead offering a 'representation' of yourself which is not necessarily true.

The function of FE in the current climate, for many in the group, brings about feelings of discomfort associated with a marketised approach and a focus on performativity. Some participants struggle with the education being valued as a social function and betterment of individuals in contrast to the sector being run as a profitable business. Bonnie (QT) reflects, *'I find it really hard to kind of marry those two things together'* and is saddened by the fact that she has to perform as part of her role to achieve data targets or be seen as a failure; *'I know at the end of the year that number on a piece of paper is not going reflect any of that, and they're going feel that they failed (students) and I'm going be told that I have failed. I just feel like what is the point?'*

The role of the stakeholders and working contexts are discussed at length by the NQT group. The participants acknowledge that there are different interpretations and expectations of professionalism based upon which sector you work in; FE is deemed to be the loosest of the sectors in terms of defining

professionalism compared to the compulsory and HE sectors which they feel are far clearer and identifiable. The group perceive that because schools and HE teacher professionalism is more developed within the literature, policy and regulation, and that the discourse is more widely accepted as normative and standardised and therefore holds higher regard. Martin (NQT) attributes it to having different skills to work in different sectors and that this should not reflect on levels of professionalism or perceptions of it based upon sectors; *'it doesn't mean that because he's at college he's more professional than a secondary school teacher or a primary school teacher, or any less professional'*.

The general consensus from the NQT group is that the organisation could be highly influential in defining what professionalism is, but the organisations perceive the concept differently from staff as many are basing it upon other stakeholder demands such as Ofsted whose agenda is focused on results. Additionally, the group identify that stakeholder influences are also shaped by political, historical and cultural contexts which for some make it easy to identify as a professional but for others this sends out a myriad of mixed messages in defining what professionalism is as an FE teacher. Their prior experiences are a key factor in how the group interpret what constitutes a professional and professionalism due to the group consisting of FE teachers who have come from a variety of backgrounds: industry and academic. These backgrounds are mentioned frequently as part of the narrative in how their ideas and beliefs shape their definitions of professionalism, and appear to be a common point of reference when trying to define professionalism in the absence of a universal professional framework for FE teachers.

Interestingly, Jean (QT) offers a perspective which is widely accepted by the QT group, related to the emotive nature of the role and how this sits within the boundaries of professionalism. She suggests that the higher up you sit within the organisational structure the less emotional you become, and there's a hardness and clearer message emanating from these individuals regarding professionalism: those at higher levels are more visible and identifiable as professionals and their behaviour is different. When Jean (QT) compares this with the emotive characteristics of FE teachers, working at ground level, she

suggests that this impacts on the clarity of defining FE teacher professionalism and the term becomes less applicable and identifiable where FE teachers are concerned.

4.3.3 Relevance of the ETF

The Education and Training Foundation (ETF), who oversee FE teacher professionalism through voluntary membership, are discussed at length by participants; this is in regard to utilising this body to form, develop and maintain FE teacher professional identities. For the NQTs, there is confusion over whether its membership is mandatory and if the professional body has any value or can contribute to FE teacher professional identities. Cameron (NQT) evidences this by stating, *'we don't need this (professional membership) to be a professional, do we? We're all still in classrooms being professional. This is just a nice bit of paper that backs it up'*.

Similar to the participants of the focus groups, there is a strong sense of values and beliefs forming the essential underpinning of FE teacher professional identities from the interviewees. When combining this with organisational values and beliefs such as ensuring achievement for all, this further serves to underpin and strengthen professional identity. For one participant, Kris (QT), this is perceived as a '*whole package*' where personal values and beliefs are combined with organisational values and beliefs which are mutually agreeable and in harmony with one another. The professional body for FE teachers, the ETF, is mentioned as being the body which was *'supposed'* (Ella, QT) to bring people together but participants are critical of its actual purpose and value within the sector with many stating that it lacks currency and recognition for members as membership is only advisory. Robert (QT) argues that a *'proper'* professional body is needed to reinforce FE teacher professionalism and their professional identities in order for the government *'to actually recognise us as FE professionals'*. In support of this, Alan (QT) suggests that being a member may not mean anything to others therefore nullifying the elevated professional standing that being a member of a professional body is supposed to have.

Robert (QT) offers an opposing view of professional membership with the ETF, and the award of QTLS which is comparable with Qualified Teacher Status

(QTS) in compulsory education; providing FE teachers with a licence to teach post 14 year olds in any setting. He thinks that holding QTLS makes you more professional and credible, alongside instilling trust in you as a professional individual and displaying a robust reputation. He sees his QTLS award as a major achievement and a badge of excellence within the sector. He goes on to explain further that you would trust a doctor who had professional membership and qualifications, and that also applies to teachers; for him professional membership is linked to being ethical, trustworthy and qualified although he is not sure if the ETF are the right group to champion FE teacher professionalism:

> *I think they need to do more for professionalism and recognise us, that we are professionals, and that we have got a lot of responsibility.*

4.3.4 Outsider Perceptions

In the first instance, the data shows that only the NQT group felt strongly about how they were portrayed and perceived by outsiders. Independently, they carried out some research prior to the focus group session to see if they could find any images of a professional as a starting point for discussion on professionalism in FE teaching. They felt that defining professionalism was linked to particular roles and that for some roles there were very few reference sources; FE teachers were one of th1e roles where it was difficult to find images that portrayed professionalism. The group agreed that different professions are portrayed differently in the media and there is a hierarchy of professionalism, with some professions regarded as more professional than others such as law and medicine. Summatively, the group felt that representations of FE teachers as professionals were missing from the media; their professionalism being more difficult to identify compared to teachers in other sectors such as schools and universities.

The participants' comments on the media reflected a sense of distrust and a tendency of feeling judged through a public lens. Carol (NQT) attributes this to the media being *'so involved in seeing'*, and using their polarised views as a platform for judging and inviting others to judge teachers in general. She

goes on further to rationalise this and offer perspectives as to why teachers may have become targets:

> *Is that because socially the world has become distorted in terms of the media, what the media's bringing out because it's such a strong format and it's so involved in our lives? Is it because of that all of a sudden we can start to see chinks in the armour of the professional that we used to know and respect, are we now going the other way and disrespecting the professional?*

Andy (NQT) agrees that the media are highly influential insofar as manipulating the public into how they view professionalism, Hayley (NQT) also questions the medias involvement; '*could [the] media be influencing our views and distorting our views?'* Many of the participants agree that the media influences everything, and for teachers in general it is usually bad news stories as opposed to good news stories. The main bad news story which they feel targets teachers from all sectors on a regular basis are student results and provider positions in league tables: all participants find these topics within the media as being very divisive. Carol (NQT) sums up her feelings on this particular aspect of her role and how she feels the media manipulate results to determine levels of professionalism:

> *We're going into the realms of Ofsted and the Department of Education who are setting standards alone in terms of our professionalism and how well we do in league tables. That's all influenced by what is perceived as being professional and outstanding, good or whatever else it is.*

The theme of being put on trial by the media runs through the discussion, particularly in conjunction with requirements from regulatory bodies such as Ofsted and the Department for Education related to data achievements. The participants struggle to understand the oversight from the media regarding the type of students and the quality of student they are receiving in FE when reporting on data. They agree that levels of professionalism should not be reported or judged as a contributing factor in whether students achieve or not, which they feel is current practice and encompasses a blame culture in FE aimed specifically at teaching staff. For the QTs and interviewees, media influence and portrayal of the sector were inconsequential compared to other more pressing issues in the sector linked mainly to performativity and constant

change. In contrast to the NQTs they did not make any references at all to the media.

Another contentious issue for some of the interviewees is that outsiders do not know the difference between the roles of teachers outside of the compulsory sector. The interviewees argue that this impacts on how they are seen professionally and are expected to behave due to outsiders not having a clear vision on what constitutes the professional identity of FE teachers. This then leads to judgements being made on FE teachers based upon more recognised behaviours which are expected and demonstrated by school teachers and HE teachers who have more standardised and structured professional identities. The interviewees claim that due to the FE teacher role comprising of many aspects of other sector teaching roles, forming and maintaining FE professional identities is difficult for them: the direct inconsistencies within the sector are causing inconsistencies for those that work within it, particularly professional identity and being able to identify as a professional teacher. Mike (QT) summarises how the difficulties in identifying as professionals has impacted on his view of FE teaching as a profession; he now views FE teaching as a vocation due to the high level of care that is needed in the role and the emphasis on making sure that *'other peoples' needs are met'*.

4.3.5 Difficulties in Forming Professional Identities

Issues with professional adaptability are identified frequently within the data in the form of struggles with forming and maintaining a consistent professional identity. This is illustrated through Andy's (NQT) experience:

> *I struggle to get into the whole teacher role… when you become a teacher, you become part of an organisation, all of a sudden your values and stuff have to fit into that otherwise you wouldn't go into the job but you actually become part of that setting*.

The changeability of not just the sector, but education as a whole is widely accepted by all participants as a natural progression for education as its function in society has changed. Participants discuss how their experiences of teachers from when they were at school are very different to what students expect of them now. They also are keen to distance themselves away from the behaviours associated with historical images of a teacher in general linked

to teaching methods and punishment; the methods used whilst they were in education are not acceptable now according to the participants, but they concur that in the past teachers had a lot more respect probably because of their authoritative behaviours and freedom to be autonomous. Bonnie (QT) summarises this well, *'the idea of professionalism it's been changed to what is suitable in the current society'*.

The data reflects that despite professional identity being moulded by beliefs and values, the situational context is highly influential and there are inconsistent messages from organisations about what FE teacher professional identity looks and feels like from a practitioner perspective. The theme of FE teacher professional identity not being fixed, and perceptions differing or not being in alignment between individuals and their workplace, appears to be an accepted issue within the sector. Despite this the influence of the workplace is strong, as illustrated by Carol (NQT):

> *My institution I work with has moulded me and changed me as a person, probably for the better. Your core values, your principles, the way you conduct yourself, for me has definitely changed over the last seven years*.

It is evident from participant responses that maintenance of core values and beliefs are part of FE teacher professional identity, but at the same time it is also evident that these have to be adapted and/or changed in line with stakeholder demands which is reflected in the data with a lack of clarity about the parameters of professional identity. Some participants agree that change is an expected element of feeling like, and being accepted as, a true professional despite the difficulties of 'weathering' constant change. There is a sense of wanting to belong to a professional group despite the parameters of the group being unclear for various reasons.

To this effect, the participants themselves agree that individual perceptions of professionalism are personal and this impacts on the ability to come to a consensus on what FE teachers' professional identities should comprise of. They associate this with their upbringing, societal norms and their own beliefs and values. They perceive that the indifference that is felt towards them as professionals can be attributed to the lack of consensus on what their

professional identities should consist of; the subjectivity and diversity of when the term professional is applied to FE teachers, they feel is impacting on identifying with a clear professional identity and creating a *'grey area'* (Cameron, NQT). One element which FE teachers find confusing is the elements of professional identity appear to differ between organisations and industry, and there are no definitive answers as to what is acceptable. The *'grey area'*, identified by Cameron (NQT), links to the displacement the participants feel in forming clear professional identities; elements of Impostor Syndrome are evident here which the participants are unaware of (Clance, 2013: Clance and Imes, 1978). This behaviour is exhibited through the participants reflecting on their worthiness in being considered professionals and the fear of being considered unworthy to be a professional teacher, particularly if you are unqualified or training, or have come from an industry background. There is debate though, as to whether professional identity and perception changes once qualified; participants find it hard to clarify if you do change your professional outlook and practice after gaining accreditation, evidencing behaviours which continue to align with Impostor Syndrome.

With regard to the continuous changes within the sector, mainly trickled down from policy and regulation changes/developments, the group agree that FE teachers have to be resilient; the NQT group feel that this is key in strengthening professional identity as a whole. They state that at work they can absorb more in an emotional capacity than they can at home, and this is because they are acting in a professional capacity where responding from a personal perspective may not have favourable outcomes. As a professional, the NQTs and QTs agree that resilience, *'keeps you going'*.

There are suggestions in the data that you can project yourself to look professional, even if you are/are not, or don't feel like you are professional. This is carried out in a number of ways and forms part of the enactment as a teacher and portrayal of yourself in that particular role. There are many references to the *'act'* of professionalism including stance, demeanour, boundaries, all symbols of power and authority, although many of the participants state that this is not their normal behaviour and because they are

classed as professionals they automatically try to enact the term and behaviours associated with the role. Cameron (NQT) speaks metaphorically of wearing different hats and reinforces this behaviour as having different characters to play. There are no references as to why professionalism has to be enacted but it is interesting that the participants feel that this is how they choose to describe being professional; through the medium of acting. Carol (NQT) demonstrates this explicitly when describing her role:

> *You do put a mask on… and you become an actor or actress as soon as you hit that floor and you've got to start teaching because you've got to portray this professionalism, whatever it is, because you do put an act on. You've got to be a good actor.*

Hayley (NQT) also reflects on carrying out this type of behaviour:

> *I think they (students) see you like as an act almost, and I sometimes say that it is a bit like coming into a role that I put on when I go into a class. It's an act, and I'm something that I'm maybe quite different actually in real life.*

This is linked back to what the participants perceive to be well recognised professions within medicine and law which they feel carry an assumption of professionalism with clear professional identities. What they term as other less professional occupations, such as retail and industry, they believe to have lower expectations of professionalism compared to teaching; this indicates a higher level of professional status and elevates teachers above particular types of jobs. The participants rationalise that high levels of professionalism are not so well recognised within FE teaching and therefore they have to put on an act of professionalism as it does not occur naturally and is not widely accepted by those outside of FE teaching.

In juxtaposition to the references to 'acting' in order to be a professional and assuming a professional identity, the group often reflect on being true to oneself and being themselves, particularly in how they interact with students; this is in direct opposition to the 'acting' that they say they undertake on a daily basis. From the narrative, it appears that the participants are choosing to reveal small elements of their personalities if they feel it to be of benefit to the students, which is not dissimilar to emotional labour (Hochschild, 2003). The concept of emotional labour involves emotional management; disguising the

real you for the benefit of the organisation. In essence, individual personalities are suppressed as you enact your role to become an extension of your working environment; the real you is hidden. Hochschild (2003: 8) exemplifies this from studies of flight attendants and their positive behaviours; their behaviour was '*on* them but not *of* them' In revealing more of themselves, the participants rationalise this as giving them distinct leverage with the students. They state that this is a distinct feature of the FE sector due to students being classed as adults, whereas in reality they are in a transient period between being a minor and adult; the participants state that this requires tactful management. For some of the participants who work in other sectors, such as schools and universities, they strongly oppose letting the students see any of their personal characteristics or behaviours and state that they have to build rapport with students using other methods which do not involve familiarisation or revealing themselves personally in any way.

4.4.0 The Role of Gatekeeping in Professions

Gatekeeping, in the form of restricting access to a profession appeared to be a particularly contentious issue within the group. This was more so when associated with who gains entrance to the profession and who allows individuals in. For the NQT focus group there was a distinct belief that professionalism can exist without, and independently, of gatekeepers. They believe that the gatekeeping element of professions has become tokenistic in the current employment landscape and is not being implemented or relevant due to the diverse nature of the FE teacher workforce. What is acknowledged from the group, is that in order to be considered a professional there is recognition that individuals must work within professional standards. They agree that in the absence of a strong professional body for FE teachers, the setting of professional standards is governed by the employers; this is where there is a lack of standardisation and consistency. They also indicate that the professional standards which are set out by their employers send a clear message to them about what is considered professional, and these are used as a form of leverage in controlling the behaviour of staff rather than being utilised for setting aspirational behaviours for FE teachers. This is in particular reference to student achievement where the group believe that professional

standards are being misused as a tool to increase performativity and sanction staff who do not meet data targets within their organisation. Participants feel this is a clear misuse of professional standards and does not align with the normative accounts of professional standards linked to other well established professions.

4.4.1 Deprofessionalisation

One of the core components of a profession, and the corresponding professionalism, is being highly qualified and committed to continuous professional development (Freidson, 2004: Hoyle, 1972: Greenwood, 1957). Within the group there is rigorous debate about this due to the deregulation of FE teacher qualifications which was enacted in 2013 (DBIS, 2012). In contrast to normative accounts of a profession, where it is accepted that being highly qualified contributes to high levels of professionalism, for the majority of the group they believe that qualifications do not necessarily make you any more professional than being unqualified: there is much acknowledgement for experience instead. Len (NQT) questions in the current climate if a qualification is needed at all, to which there are several replies from the group about a teaching qualification no longer being required to teach in FE due to government deregulation. Shaun (NQT) even goes as far to suggest that *'CPD doesn't have to come into professionalism'*, and Miles (NQT) agrees *'whether we're qualified or not really, it's immaterial'*; the job still has to be done. These statements appear to be connected to the group still having to, and being encouraged to, carry out their teaching roles despite being unqualified.

In terms of being qualified to carry out the role, participants find it worrying that there is no requirement to be qualified or belong to a professional body in order to teach within the sector. Mel (QT) thinks that it is *'disgraceful'* and Rachel (QT) rationalises her worries by adding *'I wouldn't try and fix a car if I wasn't a mechanic, so why would they let people try and teach if they are not qualified teachers?'* Within the narrative there is a sense of professional embarrassment and also worry that this is accepted in the sector as normal practice for FE teachers. For the QTs they are unanimously clear that FE

teachers should be qualified to teach and continue to develop themselves whilst working within the sector.

There is an acknowledgement by some of the group that more value is now placed on being knowledgeable as opposed to experienced; this is based upon their historic views of teaching in FE where previously industry experience was considered the gold standard. The group now believe that there is a juxtaposition forming between FE teachers being academically qualified and industry qualified, despite this concept being identified positively as dual professionalism by the professional body (ETF) and a recommended requirement by the ETF to be an effective practitioner in FE. The concept of dual professionalism, although not mentioned explicitly, is a feature of the dialogue of several of the interviewees. They frequently mention the difficulties in trying to be highly qualified in their specific subject areas in addition to being qualified to teach. For some they are unsure of which should take priority, or if they should be on an equal footing; the importance of each is referred to consistently but the interviewees are undecided on which the gatekeepers prefer them to prioritise, or how they should approach being experts in two unrelated subjects. The majority believe that many aspects of their professionalism stem from being qualified and attribute this to the studies in professionalism that they carry out as part of their teacher training qualifications. They regard those with a teacher training qualification as higher status than those without and associate the 'trend' implemented by the government for deregulation as a damaging factor to the profession and the standards of those working in FE.

Another area of discomfort is linked to not having to be qualified to teach in FE insofar as being *'found out'*, which Alan (QT) acknowledges that people are not aware of and it is not widely known; he believes that one of the top indicators of professionalism is being qualified, therefore not being qualified sends out the wrong message if FE teachers are to be defined as professionals. He states that there is an unspoken assumption that as teachers, people perceive that you are qualified just as in any other profession and is unsure of what they may think if they discovered otherwise. Robert (QT)

is in agreement and states that qualifications are crucial for credibility or students, parents and peers may not listen to you stating, *'why would I give you that respect if you don't have those qualifications? You need them'*. For Ella (QT) this does not appear to be an issue as she feels that if she has the knowledge it does not matter if her work is accredited or not, as long as students gain the qualifications. Mike (NQT) too feels that deregulation is not an issue as part of the bigger picture:

> *You could argue that due to the teaching profession being the way it is, that opening the doors to more people that would want to teach, it's a good example of that. But I just don't necessarily feel um, that there's a formal standardisation regarding the qualification*.

This is not the opinion of Kris (QT), who believes that FE teachers should be highly qualified both in their subject area and teaching; by doing this she feels it forges a path onto professionalism and helps to maintain it. There are links here to Mike's (NQT) notions of professionalism, underpinned by qualifications, as he too believes that qualifications take you down an avenue which bifurcates into subject specialisms and teaching; it is then up to the individual to try and bring them back together as a dual professional. Mike (NQT) sees his teaching qualification being the start of his FE teaching professional journey and acts as an introductory benchmark of his professionalism; an indicator of quality. This is also the opinion of Robert (QT), having the qualifications acts as a license to teach and illustrates professionalism and dedication to your chosen profession due to the sheer hard work and time committed in order to achieve it.

There is another perspective within this discussion; this relates to the notion of professional credibility with stakeholders if you are not qualified. Some of the participants suggest that the whole concept of not requiring any qualifications in order to teach is something to be ashamed of, and lack of qualifications may influence an individual's opinions of your capabilities even if you are highly experienced, although one of the QTs does state that experience does not necessarily mean that you are doing the job well. Hayley (NQT) reflects that *'their opinion would change of me if they knew I wasn't as qualified… they would see me as less professional'*; the group wholeheartedly agree with this

statement and discuss the fear of being discovered as unqualified teachers by the stakeholders, particularly students and parents. Valerie (NQT) asks, *'would parents want you teaching their children if they found out you weren't qualified?'* to which Hayley (NQT) responds *'it's beliefs and subjectiveness I guess. It doesn't mean I'm any worse at the job… It's the perception of what they think as well and their parents think'*.

4.4.2 Influence of the ETF

The role of the ETF in gatekeeping appears to be contentious across all participants of the study. The participants of the focus group reflected on how hard it was to get access to a profession and be accepted, due to the gatekeepers ensuring that access was limited and restricted to those who could satisfy their minimum requirements. They also acknowledged that for ease of entry some prior status was required: *'it used to be a lot harder to get into that profession (teaching). You had to be a certain level of society. You had to have a certain level of education, didn't you? You had to get in there but not these days'* (Cameron NQT). The relevance of the ETF, post deregulation, appears to be a recurring issue for the interviewees and for some its purpose is highly questionable in today's open door market into FE teaching. Alan (QT) questions the benefits of the ETF, *'is it going to make me a better teacher or more professional? Where's the inspiration, where's the motivation to join them?'*. Robert (QT) shows concern too in this area:

> *I feel that they (the ETF) should give us some more support through the government. Staff are not truly sure what professional formation means. You just get a name on a card, it's not really enough. I think they (ETF) should polish up what they are doing and reinforce what they are doing a bit more, help us a bit more.*

The group disapprove of the fact that it is easier now to become an FE teacher than it has ever been and conclude that the lack of gatekeepers is having a direct impact on the status of FE teachers suggesting that it is diluting the profession. The apparent ease of entry, and no requirement to be a qualified teacher is not an aspect of the profession that sits comfortably with the group. Kris (QT) argues *'I think there should be an association or an organisation that*

we're all members of, so we can all contribute into some way… I think that still needs to be a compulsory association that we're all involved in, definitely'.

The power of the ETF in FE teaching is also brought into question due to there being a seemingly lack of compliance within the sector as a consequence of deregulation, particularly linked to being highly qualified. Alan (QT) argues that *'you could be a professional sportsperson and you don't have to have a piece of paper say you qualified in it'*, Ella (QT) further rationalises this, *'if somebody doesn't necessarily have as many qualifications as another person but they have a vast wealth of experience, in my opinion that is better than the qualifications in some areas'*. Support for this is also evident from Mike (NQT) as despite being newly qualified, with the relevant teaching qualification, he feels that this achievement will probably not provide him with what he needs to be a professional teacher; he alludes to being qualified as *'lip service'* but he is unsure who he is trying to satisfy in the process. He attributes issues with misalignment of the gatekeepers, himself, and his employer, with the practice of FE teachers working unqualified with no pressure to become highly qualified due to deregulation. Summatively, Mel (QT) questions the lack of impact the ETF have over FE teacher professionalism and suggests that the lack of robust gatekeeping means that virtually anyone can gain access to the profession now which *'devalues'* FE teachers greatly.

The voluntary element of belonging to the ETF is highly criticised by many of the interviewees and they believe it should be mandatory in order to bring FE teaching into alignment with the requirements of other recognised professions. Ella (QT) feels that the current offering from the ETF gives '*the wrong impression*' and the previous aim of bringing networks of professionals together has been lost in the new offering. The implications of not being a member of a professional body are already evident to Robert (QT) in his daily working practice:

> *I do think it should be mandatory to be involved in it (professional membership) because it improves people's professionalism. It gives them something to follow, guidelines. I have looked at some tutors, not saying here or anywhere, but I have looked, and people do not follow*

codes of practice… they should be enforced to follow their code of practice to be fair. Also, then their work is more professional.

The group agree that the ETF are a '*lighter*' (Jean QT), less regulated, professional body when compared to professional bodies associated with recognised professions, and for this reason its membership is low. Voluntary membership is also criticised heavily and the participants believe that the ETF, when it was known as the IfL, were taken more seriously as membership was made mandatory by the government; this meant that all teachers in FE were brought together under one professional body. Mel (QT) states that as it currently stands, she perceives there are very few members of the ETF compared to the memberships of other professional bodies outside of FE teaching, such as law and medicine, and the ETF are not helping themselves by failing to promote benefits of membership. Some participants were teaching when professional membership was free and mandatory, and argue that this method was far more effective in bringing together professionals and encouraging them to engage with professional formation. Despite some explaining that within their organisations there were colleagues who were resistant to this, they state that for the period of mandatory membership they felt that perceptions of the profession were improved and status was higher. Regardless of the negative associations between the group and the ETF, the group do feel it is important to belong to a professional body of some sort in order to reinforce their professionalism and enhance status.

In terms of fees, Mike (NQT) relays a sense of discomfort and resentment regarding *'paying'* for his professionalism, in reference to ETF membership. As with many of the participants of the focus groups, Ella (QT) states that the fees for joining and applying for professional formation have prevented her from engaging with the ETF and instead she has sought out subject/industry professional membership and accreditation instead, which is either free or at a nominal cost. For many participants this is an acceptable alternative, to be recognised as subject or industry professionals, rather than the expense of being recognised as an FE teaching professional; they accept that professional membership is important and have sought out alternative memberships to the ETF. Jean (QT) affirms this in the following statement, *'I don't think my*

professionalism is dictated by whether I can pay to be a member of a certain society'.

Many participants state that their salaries do not reflect financial reward linked to a profession and that professional membership of the ETF and industry professional membership are not in line with FE teacher pay. They feel that payment for professionalism is *'archaic'* and needs to be removed; many of the group indicate that they are using what is freely available through their communities of practice and online to reinforce their professionalism in the absence of having the funds to pay for professional membership. Interviewees admit that this situation is not ideal, they want a cohesive and representational professional body that acts to quality assure, but feel the costs and credibility of the ETF outweigh the benefits of membership.

Where professional status is concerned, known as QTLS, this is also brought into question due to the opt in approach of gaining it. Martin (NQT) suggests that QTLS can be bought and it is not an indicator of professionalism, although he feels that it is an award which shows a commitment to professionalism. He believes that by having QTLS status does not increase levels of professionalism in any way, *'that one piece of paper doesn't mean you're any worse or any better does it?'*. The group agree that QTLS status holds very little currency or status within the sector and is not something which acts as a driver for change in professional behaviour once gained. Many of the respondents state that they are only carrying out professional formation to achieve QTLS for their own benefit and to bolster their own feelings of self-worth and status as FE teachers, they feel it lacks value or recognition within the workplace or amongst their peers.

The voluntary aspect of applying for QTLS also acts as a barrier in addition to the financial cost of the award prior to submission. The majority of the group state that they will not engage with professional formation leading to QTLS as there is no diktat for completion and the process is costly. Another reason for non-engagement is the perception that gaining QTLS will not change anything regarding the participants' professional practice or signal a higher status

compared to their previous statuses; QTLS is not viewed as holding much value or credibility.

Over a third of the respondents were employed as trainee teachers and therefore have gauged that their employers do not hold QTLS as a high priority, if a priority at all. They are already working in the sector as teachers and this, they argue, has proved they can carry out the role without having to be qualified or go through professional formation. Previously under the leadership of the IfL, professional formation leading to QTLS was free under mandatory membership and the participants argue that this requirement was more beneficial and had more impact; they state that they would be fully engaged if this method returned. Valerie (NQT) argues that you are only considered a professional if you hold the funds to be able to apply for professional membership and currently she is not paid as a professional so the membership will always elude her.

4.4.3 Employers as Gatekeepers

In regard to setting professional standards, there is some confusion within the group on who sets the standards, if they are enforceable, and whom carries out the enforcing. They agree that in other well-formed professions this would sit with the professional bodies but feel this is not distinct for FE teachers who are overseen by the ETF. The role of the employer as the gatekeeper for FE teacher professionalism appears to be the default for many of the participants in identifying professionalism, this is not without its own set of difficulties as outlined by Carol:

> *The institution you work for automatically makes you become professional. You have to adhere to terms and conditions of your contract, you have to. Being a professional is making sure that they're learning and that I'm in control of those children and that everything around them is orchestrated in a professional manner. I'm forced to do that by my institution that I work with, just like a nurse is forced to do that in the institute they work in… contextually it's got to be right, hasn't it? I think that the influence of the institution you work for, you have to adhere to their terms and conditions which does really make you professional to a certain point. You have to have a demeanour, attitude*

> *to work, to honour that, I think those outside influences, I mean for us guys as teachers, we see it all the time.*

Len (NQT) also omits the ETF as prominent gatekeepers of FE teacher professionalism in his statement and identifies employers as a key influence in gatekeeping:

> *On a social and cultural level we have an idea what a professional is and then on an institutional level there's another idea because we've got standards to meet as well'. The institution are setting out the standards to follow so they're setting out what a professional is.*

In identifying the employers as being the main gatekeepers the participants agree that this gives them a clear understanding of behaviours in the workplace, although these do not necessarily align to normative accounts of professional behaviours as many of them concede that the *'structures'* sit within the ideologies of performativity and are strongly linked to the marketisation of the sector. This can be seen in the following comments: *'that's their job. They've got to tick a box, haven't they?'* Terry (NQT*), and 'there is the very big focus on data and quantifying a sort of unquantifiable profession because it's about people not numbers'* (Jean QT). The participants argue that you can be highly professional but if you do not meet expected targets regarding student achievement then employers act as gatekeepers to discredit individual professionalism due to lack of performance; they feel that achieving, or not achieving data targets, is not a measure of professionalism and is not used in other professions to measure levels of professionalism in the same way as it is in teaching. Terry (NQT) provides an example of this: *'at the end of the day which is more important to the institution. Is it the results at the end, or the things that they're doing before it?'*

From the discussions with interviewees, there appears to be an emergent theme of employers and all stakeholders being the gatekeepers of FE teacher professionalism; the many strands of governance work to ensure that FE teachers act to self-govern in some way despite it not deriving from one single source. The multiple voices on what it is, and means to be a professional has brought about confusion for the participants and they are managing this by choosing the most influential gatekeeper amongst the parties; this is mainly

the employer and students. The ETF are rarely mentioned as being an influential gatekeeper of FE teacher professionalism. Alan (QT) has already questioned whether being a member of the ETF means anything and in terms of gatekeeping he acknowledges there should be an awareness of the professional body, *'which you try and keep in line with, but nobody's sort of really reinforcing that'*. He feels that the gatekeepers are everyone he works with in the form of *'all things that I would expect, someone to expect of me. I'd think that's part of being professional'*, illustrating the power employers and stakeholders hold as opposed to the professional body. Ella (QT) also supports this as she identifies the employer as the gatekeeper of professionalism alongside Mike (NQT) who states that employers provide structure on professional behaviours which helps guide staff in acting professionally. He recognises that professional bodies should be the authority in determining and upholding professionalism but struggles with how FE teaching is fairly *'unregulated'* compared to other professions: *'it doesn't make sense on why it's not regulated (FE teacher professionalism)… it doesn't sound coherent. It's not really a specialised profession (FE teaching)'*.

4.4.4 Issues with Gatekeeping

The qualified teachers identify that to be considered a professional, you should be compliant with the required standard of behaviour for the profession you are working in. What they are unclear of is, who sets, communicates, and upholds the behaviours which are expected of FE teachers in a standardised manner; and what exactly is needed to become an FE teaching professional. Sally (QT) illustrates this by saying, *'we have professionals standards but they are not specifically set for a thing. So there's professional standards but they are not profound… it's probably in a policy somewhere'*. The group agree that values and standards do come into the equation of professionalism but concede that the professional body and employers are not aligned in terms of communicating clearly what they are and how they are applied; from the discussion the participants appear to struggle in identifying who is the overseer and ultimate voice in determining FE teacher professionalism amongst the backdrop of many voices and potential gatekeepers.

For the QTs, despite gatekeeping being associated with being highly qualified, they express that professionalism extends beyond qualifications and gatekeeping does not necessarily guarantee professionalism as an end product. They provide consistent examples of where gatekeeping has not been applied within their organisations in terms of entry into teaching, and this has had no adverse effect on the students or the professionalism of the staff who are carrying out the teaching. They associate this with attitudes and approaches to work which they feel supersede the primary requirements of gatekeepers of a profession, such as being highly qualified and experienced.

In terms of aligning professionalism to particular professions, some of the interviewees argue that professionalism transcends any specific profession, occupation, or role. Mike (NQT) argues that you cannot compare levels of professionalism based upon the example of a butcher and a cleaner, as despite them not being considered professions, the individuals who carry out the roles can still act professionally. For Mike (NQT) the lack of gatekeepers for entry into professions, occupations, and trades have no relevance on whether a person acts professionally or unprofessionally; professionalism is determined by the individual and not the gatekeepers.

4.5.0 The Distribution of Power and Control within the Sector

The authoritative voice is mentioned frequently by participants as being highly characteristic of a professional, there is also an assumption of power being carried alongside it, *'a demeanour'* which is portrayed as aloofness (Carol NQT). The NQTs believe that the only real place they can use any form of autonomy and power is in the classroom, but they reflect that this is also in demise with the student enforcing their rights as a consumer which further erodes teaching staff autonomy. Additionally, the NQTs feel that for this reason they do not feel able to take risks in their teaching for fear of repercussions and state that any risk taken is low and calculated to minimise any comeback. This is exemplified by Valerie (NQT), *'students are more aware, aren't they?, of their rights, and what should happen and what shouldn't happen',* illustrating the shift in power between teaching staff and students compared to the sector 20 years ago. Andy (NQT) also agrees and suggests

that how FE teachers perceive themselves in their professional capacity in the current climate does not carry any associations with holding any power; *'they might not think they're in a powerful position'*.

The lack of holding any power or autonomy is acknowledged by Karen (QT) as she struggles to rationalise why FE teachers are so accountable when *'we are not in control'*; over their work, in particular linked to student achievements. Mike (NQT) also struggles with the fact that he works in a controlled environment, *'I do have some autonomy, not full autonomy because obviously I've got the students to please, I have my manager to please, walk-ins (mini observations)… those are sort of things put you off from having full autonomy,* The group struggle to understand that if you are not in control of your own work then how can you be accountable for the results? They believe the high levels of responsibility are not commensurate with the low level autonomy they are afforded, and they are under constant pressure to *'prove'* their worth and value (Karen QT). Robert (QT) asks why FE teachers have such a burden of responsibility compared to other sectors; he feels this is not commensurate. *'I would say compared with teachers that teach in schools and lecturers in HE, FE is, you know, there's more responsibility on you… it is a big role and it's a lot of responsibility'*. He feels that this level of responsibility is not reciprocated by the students, or their parents/guardians, which creates an imbalance; the lack of government support he also feels is an issue and they do not recognise the high levels of responsibility that they have put upon FE teachers as a result of policy and legislation.

4.5.1 Influences of Organisations

Within the discussions there are clear references to the participants feeling controlled by the organisations they work for; this control they feel extends outside of the workplace, and means that they constantly have to self-regulate and be on guard. The participants state that they do act differently at home now that they are teachers. Hayley (NQT) explains, *'you've still got to be professional to a certain extent'* and Carol (NQT) adds *'I find myself being like that (professional) at home'*. Anna (QT) summarises that behaving constantly in this moderated way means that *'we can bore ourselves sometimes'*. Alan

(QT) thinks that in the wider picture FE teachers are not in charge of their own professionalism; everyone else is, which is why behaviours are moderated and then labelled as professional behaviours by the organisations you work for. It would appear that all behaviours are classified by the participants as either professional or unprofessional; they are very clear about this, every behaviour and action can be labelled and this is accepted as a normal way of working in the sector. Ella (QT) illustrates this by stating that FE teachers, *'they listen, they do what they're told… they're responsible'*. Kris (QT) also shows evidence of this *'in terms of doing what I want, probably not, no'*; exemplifying that FE teachers are not in control of their work or professionalism and are operating both through compliance in terms of professional standards, and public expectations of them as teachers.

The compliance model of working resonates highly with all of the participants, regardless of their length of service and experience. This form of organisational control, with repercussions for those that do not adhere is evident, *'we're accountable'* (Karen QT), *'obviously they're checking'* (Kris QT). The participants discuss at length the performative measures that are in place throughout the sector and how these are used as a form of control by organisations in terms of professional status, pay and stature amongst peers. Cameron (NQT) states that whoever is performing best, in terms of student data, would be deemed as '*more professional'* to which Andy (NQT) responds *'and what's professional about that?'*. The focus on which organisation has the best data appears to have overshadowed the traditional professional behaviours that the participants feel they should be demonstrating due to performative requirements. Karen (QT) argues, *'you can't quantify a lot of our work actually from the way that we* behave'.

Across all participants, they are not happy about their professionalism being judged based upon data alone, or *'league table mentality'* (Carol NQT). They believe the moral purpose of education cannot be measured and this way of looking at their practice really illustrates their professionalism in a more insightful way through betterment of students based on their point of entry. Jean (QT) states that *'our moral and ethical values about education, and how*

we teach our students, you can't see in the results' and Sarah (QT) agrees, this is something *'You can't quantify'*. Examples provided by the participants in opposition to performative measures are robust, *'success isn't just judged by a stand-alone test. You shouldn't be just judged by a stand-alone test, you should be judged by all the changes in those people* (Rachel QT). Carol (NQT) states that as a consequence of performativity *'the poor teachers will fall by the wayside'* and Miles (NQT) concedes that *'the workload increases, you know, there's extra pressures on the teachers'*. The mechanisms of different forms of power and the associated pressures are evident in the narratives:

> *Trying to turn around the work etcetera. Is it fair for a teacher, any teacher, to be gauged as poor given the pressures from Ofsted and government organisations. There's a fear of league tables or having Ofsted come in, is there necessarily such a thing as a poor teacher?* (Miles NQT).

Carol (NQT) as an experienced teacher, undergoing what was previously teacher training qualifications, asks:

> *You must have to question yourself thinking, "why am I in this? Why am I having to do this?" There must be a reason why I'm doing this therefore not necessarily professionalism but your whole job is really, it's not necessarily on the line but is deemed as there's something not right. I see it all the time at my school and I hate it, I can't stand it, it's horrendous… there's chinks in everybody's armour. You can't pull out good, outstanding lessons every single day.*

Miles (NQT) argues that the performative aspect of the role has consequences, '*it's about work, life, balance as well though. I'm making the point, if you put too many demands on people, that professionalism is going to change'*. Terry (NQT) puts forward that the behaviour change relates to blind compliance by FE teachers in the face of working in a sector that is reduced to *'ticking a box… that's their job (FE teachers), they've got to tick a box, haven't they?'*. Jean (QT) adds, *'there is the very big focus on data and quantifying a sort of unquantifiable profession because it's about people'*. Mike (NQT) confirms this *'it's like a manufacturing process, isn't it? Trying to get learners through the qualification'*.

The accountability linked to the role is evident throughout the data, the participants feel highly accountable for many things that are out of their control but feel pressured to perform in any case. Jean (QT) evidences the accountability to her employer she feels, much of which is unreasonable and outside of the remit of her role:

> *We are accountable for things we have so little control over, like attendance and punctuality and that sort of thing that we just, you know, how can we be judged on that? We do, we probably monitor attendance or whatever, but we can't force them to get out of bed... it's what the government wants, it's that data isn't it?*

Amongst the narratives, there is evidence that trying to perform constantly is having a negative effect on the participants and how they feel as professionals. Lack of performance associated with achieving the data requirements makes them feel less professional than those that succeed in meeting data targets, yet the work they put in they feel is not reflected in the data:

> *My own perception, my own thoughts are that if I don't get lots of students to achieve, I take that as a bit of personal knock. I'll take a bit of a knock to my professionalism. I try not to let it, but I do think, you know, I question myself, have I succeeded? But I still think they've learned something. I like to think that the students have learned something, they might not get to where they need to be* (Alan QT).

It is evident that FE teachers feel an increasing amount of pressure within their roles from a multitude of sources, these sources are increasing in number and often have conflicting requirements which complicate working within the sector greatly; also it adds to the confusion FE teachers feel trying to orientate themselves as professionals. The participants believe that the main source of pressure derives from their employers as they strive to meet government targets and retain funding, as evidenced by Cameron (NQT), *'I had a breakdown in the staff room the other week cos there's just so much pressure on everything'*, Mike (NQT) too; *'with your role being so stretched… time is always the issue'*. Karen (QT) also provides evidence of this:

> *You're not just responsible for getting across that bit of your course, you're responsible for a whole lot more… These things that we are*

responsible for, nobody has ever told me about them, I am not aware of and then I find a lot of the time, I'm firefighting'.

The role in itself, they believe, is highly stressful and they show evidence of this increasing as the demands on them build through consistent changes within the sector and the quality of the students that are entering FE. Andy (QT) talks of *'winding'* himself up every week at the prospect of teaching students that are not going to achieve because of behaviour, ability and attendance issues, whilst Cameron (QT) states he goes unnecessarily *'crazy'* at being asked to do something that is not his job when he has so many other things to do. They both state that in any other sector this would not happen but somehow it is normal, and accepted behaviour in FE to push staff as much as possible until they inevitably bend or retaliate. Mike (NQT) believes that all the additional tasks that FE teachers are asked to perform, apart from pressurising staff, also *'hinders'* the teaching role of actually teaching in the classroom and processes are more in line with being *'reactive more than proactive'*; a crisis led approach to working.

4.5.2 Influence of Students

One of the main stakeholders who the participants believe to hold a substantial amount of power are the students. This is widely documented in the literature with the continuous promotion of students as consumers of education post 1990s, and has, and is, supported by the government and other high level stakeholders such as Ofsted. Ella (QT) explains this as *'FE teachers hav[ing] a bit more of a responsibility because they're their customers if you like'.* Participants discuss frequently the issues they have with students who are now aware that they hold power and are coercive in the learning environment to the detriment of their professional standing, respect and authority as students supersede FE teachers rights and judgments on a regular basis. Much of this is attributed to the funding attached to student achievement which as a consequence teaching staff have to comply with student demands frequently, and turn a blind eye to unsatisfactory behaviours. Valerie (NQT) relates an incident which typifies this approach:

I had a student whose parents were extremely protective over their child. They're in and out, in and out of school and this student comes

> *in one day with a big hat on. I asked the student why they were wearing a big hat and they were rude to me. So, I asked them to leave the classroom. So then Head came to see me and said, "I've had so and so's mum in and why have you sent them out the classroom for wearing a big hat?" My argument was, you're asking me to adhere to a uniform policy and a behaviour policy. One, big hats aren't part of the uniform and two, they were rude. If I'm telling other students to put their blazers on and do their top buttons up, why is that child any different for wearing a big hat? Do you know what I was told? Parents. Just do anything to keep them and a quiet life.*

Martin (NQT) had a similar experience where he was undermined by a Year 6 student, their parents, and also the Deputy Head regarding a student refusing to wear school PE kit. The resolution was to allow the student to wear a branded football shirt when other students had to wear school PE kit in order for the student to participate in PE. Martin said that this seriously undermined him as the class teacher as the student and their parents overruled his decision to not allow the student to take part in PE until they wore the correct PE kit in line with the school rules. Martin (NQT) reflected that this also caused him issues with the rest of his class from that point onwards as the other students observed he held little power over maintaining his decisions if a student challenged it; he refers to this as *'anarchy from then on'* and *'I would say one thing, and another teacher will say another thing. Then that student will say "well Mr Smith said that I'm not allowed to do that". Then they'll come back and go "Mr so and so said I can"'*. Heidi (NQT) agrees that students *'play you against each other'* and the group suggest that because FE students are older they can be worse in terms of manipulating staff compared to the children that some of the NQTs are teaching. Terry (NQT) states that:

> *Our FE students, the majority might be more mentally aware about things but I also think they can be more vindictive… rather than the younger students who make just one off comments. I think the other ones could, can, really target you and you know, really make you feel bad*.

Insofar as students knowing that their teachers were training and working as unqualified teachers, the NQT group state that this would be disastrous if the students found out. Carol (NQT) recalls her students asking her what she was going to university for on a Wednesday night, and the fear of them finding out

she was unqualified; *'I just say that I'm doing some teaching stuff and they'll go "ok, see you later, bye" and that's it, but I'd never actually tell them that I'm doing my teacher training qualification, I just wouldn't because they could eat you alive'*. Hayley (NQT) agrees:

> *You already get some of them playing you off against each other, oh I wanna be in your class, I wanna be in your class. If all of my hundred students knew that I wasn't qualified as opposed to the other guy that's in the department, whose been there for what, ten years nearly now, who are they gonna wanna go with/to?*

Alan (QT) aligns this to student expectations, which are high; *'there's a lot of expectations… and that's a student's perspective'*. This is associated with the 'learner first' approach which has developed within FE to become a benchmark and position from which all education services are offered within FE. Mike (NQT) reveals that this is having an impact on his practice on an ongoing basis as student needs have to be dealt with before any learning can take place:

> *Students could have some sort of a bad day or a bad night, they've got a bad grade so they weren't happy with the feedback, or they were having problems at home, or funding issues. Trying to solve all these issues that get in the way, that put a stop to learning. All that needs to be dealt with before the teaching and the teacher part takes place.*

4.6.0 Defining Professionalism in the Sector

One of the key characteristics of a professional, according to normative accounts, is that individuals have status and associated respect both inside and outside of their profession (Freidson, 200: Hoyle, 1972: Greenwood, 1957). The NQT participants talk about the *'weight'* of professionalism that different professions hold, and feel that compared to law and medicine, teaching does not have as much weight professionally than more well established professions. Many of the participants believe that FE teaching has not been accepted as a profession. They believe that prior to the millennium there was a lot more respect for teachers than exists now, mainly due to teachers being afforded a greater level of autonomy which was more socially accepted by students and the public compared to the present.

The NQT focus group identify that inside and outside the sector professional snobbery is evident alongside hierarchical judgements; these judgements are being made of staff based on their roles, which can cause conflict and affect status. Shaun (NQT) describes this as *'the great divide',* which Cameron (NQT) attributes to professions being categorised as high, medium or low level i.e: higher and lower professions. The group believe that FE teaching sits within the confines of a lower profession when compared to other educational sectors and agree that this is why their status is also low. Participants rationalise that regardless of which sector you work in, this does not define, and should not define your status, as the commonality is that they are all teachers and logically they should all have the same level of status; they recognise that this is not the case for FE trachers and provide a variety of reasons why this may be. One of the reasons is the continuous intervention from stakeholders regarding FE teacher professional requirements and ways of working. Participants state that they feel undermined in their roles on a daily basis from a variety of groups and individuals which reduces their status due to having reduced autonomy. For some this reduces their confidence and as teachers they say that they feel unworthy and lack a voice, or any power.

Another reason for the NQT group feeling that their status has been reduced is linked to qualifications, or lack of them required to become a teacher in FE. They agree that whether they think that having to be qualified or not is a good or bad thing, being qualified does have a status attached to it. Many of the participants in this group did not feel that qualifications indicated a level of professionalism when compared to experience but they do concede that status is clearly linked to being qualified. As one of the focus groups are teachers in training for their PGCE, they indicate that they feel they have very low status and exhibit signs of Impostor Syndrome whilst carrying out their roles. The low status is exemplified by Martin (NQT) in the following statement, *'if you're training, you're not good enough to teach me because you're training'*. This particular focus group are in a position of already being teachers within their organisations, some for many years, but at the same time they are also teacher training students; the underlying theme here is that as students they feel impostors as teachers, and as teachers they feel impostors as students. There

is also an inherent fear that students will discover that their teachers are in this position and devalue them, as well as reduce their status, in comparison to qualified teachers. Overwhelmingly the group agree that it would be of no benefit to the students or their own professional status to inform students that their teacher was not qualified and undergoing teacher training.

Status and respect, for the interviewees, is an important factor and positive consequence of being an FE teaching professional; respect is high on the agenda and is explained as *'people you can look up to'* (Robert QT). Status and respect are linked to being highly qualified and a member of a professional body, but this is an area of difficulty for many participants due to the deregulation of FE teacher qualification and membership requirements; this, they feel, has had a negative impact on status levels for FE teachers and is continuing to do so under the current professional frameworks. Ella, (QT) identifies that those with qualifications seemingly appear to place themselves at a higher status which she does not feel is always appropriate due to a qualification not guaranteeing that you are a good teacher.

Enhanced rates of pay are mentioned by the majority of participants as a factor in being defined as a professional. This enhanced rate is linked to elevation of status which participants have already mentioned is at odds within the FE sector due to the supressed rates of pay for FE teachers. There are suggestions from some of the participants that you can still be a professional if you are not paid, or do not receive higher pay, but then Shaun (NQT) says that as a result of this 'people's expectations would change' and is highly applicable within FE where a 'more for less' approach to ways of working transcends status levels. Some of the group perceive that the higher an individual is paid, then the more professional you are considered to be. Both Shaun and Terry (NQTs) argue that professionalism is gauged by money and ratify this by suggesting that if an individual worked for a low fee or for free then expectations would probably be a lot lower. The salaries of FE teachers are raised briefly in relation to status by only one interviewee, Robert (QT). He feels *'concerned'* that teachers from other sectors get paid a lot more than FE teachers and attributes this to lowering the status of FE teachers in addition to

employers taking advantage of the situation by deliberately supressing salaries. He states that pay is lower than it should be but remonstrates '*that's how it is, what can you do?*'

The function of the FE sector and FE teacher role also play a part in levels of status and respect as the participants reflect on their function within society and the move away from betterment of individuals, not just academically, but socially. It is clear that the focus now for the sector is academic achievement, legislated for and overseen by the government, but the participants indicate that they struggle with these performative measures and question the morality of this:

> *I've got people in my groups who will not change their grade but they may have changed their outlook, they may have changed their behaviour, they may have changed who they are, and which is more important? The achievement of some sort of grade, or the fact that they've become a different potentially better person?* (Sally QT).

Bonnie (QT) concurs that *'you're not just a teacher, you are a social worker, you're a repairer'* with Anna (QT) adding, *'we're here to make them better people… education is a long game'*.

The QTs link status to value within the sector and identify that they feel devalued for a number of reasons, the majority of them being out of their control. Due to the nature of the students taught and the subjects involved, Karen (QT) feels that outsiders *'look down on us'*, adding *'we pick up their rubbish'*; this is in reference to teaching a high number of students for resits. Sue (QT) is in agreement and offers *'we pick up where they've left off',* in reference to teachers in the compulsory sector. Only one participant in the group feels just as valued and of an equal status than a school teacher. Many of the participants indicate that they lack voice due to reduced status and their value in contributing to the sector is not recognised. The lack of invitation to participate in key areas of curriculum development by the government and awarding bodies ,Jean (QT) associates with FE teachers not having a voice:

> *We are so much influenced from external people other than teachers in FE. The changes to the GCSE curriculum specifications are all being*

decided by members of the government, ministers not teachers. They don't seem to take recommendations from teachers.

4.6.1 Blame Culture

The participants identify that within the sector there is a blame culture and this is directly aimed at the FE teachers themselves in terms of student non achievement; there appear to be no allowances for student failure, any failure is directly associated with the teaching staff and students are not implicit in any taking any responsibility at all. Hayley (NQT) illustrates this in how her organisation approach student failure; '*I have noticed that from a senior management level there is no such thing as a bad cohort, it's the teacher that needs to do more'*. Tara (QT) relays the unfairness she feels:

> *But we are measured against those results as well, but it's about if you can reach them as people and get them to start changing and growing as a person, you enable them to become better learners which in turn might take that little bit longer.*

Here, it is evident that performative measures cannot account for the underpinning work FE teachers do with students that will not meet the achievement targets set. Robert (QT) reveals how difficult it is trying to avoid being blamed for things out of his control, regarding students, as he feels accountable for ensuring that the organisation retains its funding:

> *You're just ringing them up (students). You're constantly nagging at them. The FE, government pay for students and then it's obviously, it's all down to attendance. So it is a lot about figures and attendance etcetera. I think FE needs more support as such. You've got to give them more help'*.

4.6.2 What is FE Teacher Professional Identity?

An issue surrounding the literature and the sector are the many variances and interpretations on clearly defining FE teaching professionalism, particularly for the NQTs. Martin (NQT) offers to the group that it is *'something'*, but he is not quite sure what that *'something'* is in relation to clarifying the components of FE teacher professionalism. Carmel (NQT) adds that the *'something'* is what you define yourself as, entirely individualised, perceptive, and is derived from your own values, thoughts and ideas about what you perceive a professional

to be. She questions who has the right to call you a professional and who gives you the right as an individual to call yourself a professional. After deliberating on Carmel's suggestion, the group concede that they cannot come to an agreement on clearly defining professionalism in FE despite already working in the sector and carrying out the roles because it is 'different for everyone' (Terry NQT). Martin (NQT) states *'you can't define professionalism because it's so grey'* which the group readily agree on. The group offer several explanations as to why they find it so difficult to define FE teacher professionalism: subjectivity of the term, individualistic interpretations of the term based on many factors, and stakeholder/situational influences, and their interpretations of the term which will be discussed consecutively below.

Subjectivity of the term, for the NQTs, is surrounded by the application and interchangeability of the term profession and professionalism. Much of the debate surrounding the two terms, profession and professionalism, is cemented in the groups' application of them in particular fields of work such as law, medicine and construction. For them, orientation of a profession and professionalism appears to be easily applied to these fields of work and enables the participants to rationalise their interpretations more easily. In terms of the construction industry, Andy (NQT) suggests that *'you can be a bricklayer and qualified but are you very professional at your job?'*, to which Hayley (NQT) adds that professionalism is a feeling but admits that some fields of work exude professionalism alongside professionalism being assumed such as doctors. Carmel (NQT) attributes this to people having individualistic interpretations of what is considered a profession and how corresponding professionalism is perceived from both inside and outside of the sector.

For the QTs, they also concur that defining FE teacher professionalism is a difficult task. They recognise that it is subjective and highly personalised, and are fearful of what this entails in practice when linked to professional behaviours of teaching staff. The group observe that the lack of cohesiveness regarding definitions of FE teacher professionalism is problematic in terms of acceptable behaviours for staff due to a lack of standards you would assume were associated with a profession; for them FE teaching is bordering on being

unprofessional in itself for failing to derive, promote, and uphold normative accounts of professionalism for FE teachers in accordance with other professions. This type of acceptance of there being no standardised view Anna (QT) associates with *'managing it by not managing it'* which leads to condoning a variety of behaviours which invariably do not sit within normative accounts of professional behaviours for other professions.

Defining professionalism in FE teaching appears to be conceptually difficult for the majority of participants who took part in the interviews. Kris (QT) poses the question, *'how is it defined?'*. After working in the sector for over five years, Alan (QT) confirms that he cannot define what constitutes an FE teaching professional and acknowledges that he should *'probably should look into it'*, Ella (QT) adds to this in that she *'supposes'* she is a professional with Kris (QT) stating that *'norms'* adopted by FE teachers act to define them as professionals. The expansiveness of defining FE teacher professionalism is expressed by some of the interviewees as too broad which they attribute to their confusion over how to interpret and orientate themselves as professionals. Ella (QT) puts forward that there are so many different interpretations of the word *'professional'* that as a consequence many variations of professionalism occur, adding that the term is *'very hard to define'* and the only defining feature of the term is its *'broadness'*.

4.7.0 Concluding Remarks

Despite there being much debate on where FE teaching sits on the professional continuum, there were few references in the discussions as to whether FE teaching can be considered a profession and associated with the corresponding professional status in its own right. Carol (NQT) touches briefly upon levels of professionalism which do link to the role being more in alignment with occupational characteristics although her ideas are mainly presented in isolation amongst the group:

> *Do you think it's because the market's flooded then with professionals now? Do you think it's because education has been more accessible to everybody over the last sort of twenty or so years? Do you think it's diluted the idea of professionalism?*

Again, amongst the QTs, there is little reference to whether FE teaching is a profession although there is mention of teaching as being *'allegedly one of the professions'* (Jean, QT) which does suggest that it may not be readily accepted as a profession by some of the participants. Mike (NQT) suggests that because FE teaching involves many altruistic behaviours from the staff that work within the sector, particularly in relation to putting one's own needs aside, that FE teaching can be defined as a vocation. The majority of the group believe that whatever the role, whether it is considered a profession or not, you can act professionally. The role of gatekeepers then becomes irrelevant according to the group as professional behaviours are utilised and generated from observing workplace behaviours of others, in addition to personal values and beliefs about workplace identity. Andy (NQT) supports this by stating, *'hairdresser, whatever you are, you've got to be professional haven't you if you're going to be good at it'*, Valerie also agrees, *'workmen, in particular, you might not see them as professional but they might see themselves as a professional'*; reinforcing the notion that your role standing does not transcend over the ability to act professionally.

Table 15 illustrates that across the data the participants are fully aware of what characteristics and traits define a profession; they consistently refer to key components of indicators of a profession, yet acknowledge that their work does not readily align with normative accounts of a profession. Within the narratives, they describe how they demonstrate professional behaviours in their daily practice but have difficulty in expressing how this aligns with a profession. The frequency and ease of the terms used by participants (Table 15), which are linked to normative accounts of a profession and professional behaviours, clearly illustrate that there is no ambiguity in identifying what a profession and being professional consists of. The narratives do reveal though that in practice, FE teachers discuss their work and identities more in line with being an occupation/alist. Within the data there is a noticeable absence of the word 'highly' to precede characteristics of a profession such as *'highly'* qualified and '*highly'* experienced; this acts to further reduce FE teaching as fitting into the frameworks which align with a profession and are more representative of an

occupation where a high level of knowledge and experience are not essential requirements.

Data extracted from the characteristic macro/micro category from the focus groups and interviews (505 occurrences in total)	Indicator of being a professional (according to Greenwood, Hoyle and Freidson)	Indicator of being an occupationalist (according to Greenwood, Hoyle and Freidson)	Outside of normative accounts - subjective and contextual
Frequency counts from the data			
They are qualified (not highly)		62	
They engage with CPD	59		
They are experienced (not highly)		36	
They behave ethically – are self-policing	33		
They are in control	25		
They do not have to be qualified		24	
They are happy in their role/work			23
They are caring	23		
They are altruistic	23		
They serve a social purpose/function – nurture betterment	23		
They are reflective	22		
They have systematic ways of working/ approaches	19		
They are autonomous	16		
They hold power	16		
They are a role model	16		
They are knowledgeable (not highly)		12	
They have specialist knowledge	11		
They are paid for what they know	8		
They are not experienced		7	
They have an ability to cope			6
Their professionalism links to practice	6		
They are dedicated	6		
They are passionate	5		
They are adaptable	5		
They have high responsibilities	5		
They are skilled (not highly)		4	
They are motivated/enthusiastic			4
They are organised			4
They engage in teamwork			3
They are an authoritative voice in their area	3		

They are not paid			3
They are competent	3		
They have character	3		
They do not engage with CPD		3	
They work hard			3
They need 'something' to qualify being called a professional	2		
They are inspiring			2
They are creative			2
They are innovative			2
They are risk takers	2		
They have transferable skills	2		
They are part of a community of practice	2		
Professionalism is naturally occurring to them	2		
They are problem solvers			1
They have long service	1		
They have a natural ability			1
They have employment skills		1	
They are impartial	1		

Table 15. - Data alignment with identified characteristics/traits of a profession/occupation according to normative accounts based on the work of Freidson (2004), Hoyle (1972) and Greenwood (1957).

Despite the data illustrating that participants know what defines a profession and a professional, there are many areas within their practice which do not align to a profession; therefore reducing the links to the definitions as such, although the participants are keen to belong to the category of a profession despite their working context making this very difficult in practice. The lack of a shared vision when multiple stakeholders and organisations are involved in defining FE teacher professionalism leads both groups to decide that a definitive definition of FE teacher professionalism is unachievable, apart from that it is reinforced by the maintenance of core values. Having no standardised view, the group agree, is problematic, but reflects the way that the sector has evolved to encompass the other sectors. As a result of this the group reflect that the defining of FE teacher professionalism has moved further away from being realised and it will continue to be this way until there is a standardised, uniform clear direction; but from whom they are unsure.

Also, it is recognised that being part of communities of practice, further bolster entitlement to be classed as a profession, and support being defined as a professional under the umbrella of being an exclusive group which is not open to everyone. Interestingly, there is little reference from participants of them being involved with or aspiring to be part of communities of practice, apart from discussing their work with their immediate peers and colleagues. There is little indication of exclusivity within their practice and more indication of universality which could be attributed to the scope of the sector's offer being vastly wide and diverse. It is noteworthy that despite FE teacher roles and their curriculums being entirely devoted to the employment and skills agenda, this is never mentioned in any of the main data despite being such a major influence on the ways FE teachers work, and are directed by their organisations; the participants appear to be intensely focused on gaining achievements rather than the purpose of the achievements.

The general disempowerment FE teachers feel comes from a variety of sources, mainly government, Ofsted and employers. They convey that their management is complex as each one has a variety of perspectives and are controlling them using different methods, although all appear to link to performativity and emotional labour. In terms of being professional, the data evidences that the participants believe that their management of these competing forces of power and control illustrate their professionalism itself, as they feel that people in other roles may not be able to cope with this way of working as effectively as they do on a daily basis. A high number of participants believe that they are targets for oppression as they are central to a process which they believe is high stakes; ensuring that all students achieve, often picking up students after failure in schools. Terry (NQT) observes, *'I think those bigwigs have got to pick on something to tell you to do',* with Mike (QT) concluding that this is part of the job and you just have to take it and move on in order to be able to do the job day after day.

Chapter 5. Discussion

5.0.0 Introduction

This chapter will review the findings from the thematic analysis of the data, and demonstrate how the 'voices' of FE teachers illustrate the difficulties of enacting their professional identities in light of normative accounts of a profession and professional constructs. As previously discussed, links to normative accounts of a profession for FE teachers are tenuous and problematic, and I have found it useful to use Foucault's work on 'problematisation' to provide a framework for discussion of the data. In this chapter the findings have been structured into several themes which problematise the work of Greenwood (1957), Hoyle (1972) and Freidson (2004) on the indicators and formation of professions and professional identities in reference to FE teaching as a profession.

Foucault's extensive work on relations of power and control are also relevant as the data suggests that this is a tangible issue which is impacting upon FE teachers being able to form professional identities, due to a lack of clarity over who holds power within the sector. Inconsistencies in how knowledge is formed, regarding FE teacher professionalism, also links to Foucault's work on knowledge creation through discursive practices. Within the sector there are many discourses on FE teacher professionalism, but no clear overarching discourse, which significantly represents or clearly identifies FE teaching as a profession and those that work amongst it as professionals. The FE sector itself appears to have multiple truths on how it views itself as a profession, what makes FE teachers professional, and how professionalism is enacted; there are many voices and no clear unified voice amongst the sector regarding FE teacher professionalism. This serves to further complicate any semblance of what FE teaching can be classed as, and a lack of clear professional identity for those that work within it.

The themes of this discussion have been derived from: the analysis of the literature, and qualitative data gained from the pilot study, the exploratory questionnaire, the two focus groups and five interviews from the representative case study. The three themes listed below are explored and discussed in

detail under the corresponding headings, and seek to answer questions which have arisen from the literature and data, as well as expand on what is already known about FE teacher professionalism.

Theme 1 - Is FE Teaching a Profession?

There is a conflict for FE teachers about the purpose of education and their roles within it.

FE teachers have a distinct lack of power, control and autonomy, and are subservient to the needs of many stakeholders

Defining whether FE teaching is a profession, and those who work within it as professionals, is problematic and not clear.

The characteristics of FE teaching align more closely with it being an occupation rather than a profession when compared to normative accounts of a profession.

Theme 2 – What is FE Teacher Professional Identity?

There is no one 'truth' regarding FE teacher professionalism; there are multiple fragmented 'truths', which affects knowledge transmission and the formation of professional constructs regarding FE teacher professionalism.

The discursive practices, linked to the production of knowledge on FE teacher professionalism, is unsystematic and lacks universality, this has a major effect on the way FE teachers recognise themselves as professionals.

Theme 3 – How Do FE Teachers Think and Act Professionally?

FE teachers have difficulties with identifying who they are professionally and this links to the concept of Impostor Syndrome.

FE teachers have fragmented, professional identities and this impacts on how they orientate themselves within the sector, and also impacts on their status levels.

FE teachers are encouraged, vicariously, to behave professionally as a result of the high levels of performativity expected within the sector; success at all costs.

5.1.0 Is FE Teaching a Profession?

Foucault argued that knowledge is formed through discursive practices, these practices consist of: a trusted body of related works, demarcation of specialist information, the establishment and setting of norms, administration of entry and exclusion, and the formation of specialist behaviour. This is fully formed

and identifiable when we discuss normative accounts of a profession and professionalism in general; the research participants effortlessly identified the traits and characteristics of a profession and a professional, which strongly correlate with the normative accounts offered by Freidson (2004), Hoyle (1972) and Greenwood (1957) (Table 1). Normative accounts of a profession and professionalism, in general, have developed due to their association with the many common identifiers of discursive practices. These discursive practices include: knowledge surrounding general professionalism encapsulating a considerable number of works on professionalism, the specialist area consisting of selection, exclusion and governance, and identifiable characteristics taking shape through institutional behaviour. Through transmission and dissemination of the above discursive practices, the corresponding truths regarding a profession and professionalism are imposed, accepted and maintained through normative accounts, and individuals can then recognise and orientate themselves as part of a specialised group (Freidson, 2004). For FE teachers, this is a particular challenge due to the lack of standardisation and inconsistencies regarding the 'knowledge' surrounding FE teaching as a profession. In relation to this is *'systematicity'*, a derivative of discursive practices, where 'things' are approached in a disciplined, orderly and systematic way; here, standardisation and consistency are key (Foucault, 1980). Due to the hybridity of FE teachers' work, and the many voices active within it, the literature and the data leads us to believe that the production of knowledge on FE teaching as a profession is unsystematic and lacks universality, mainly due to the lack of standardisation and consistency in the sector; consequentially, professional norms for FE teachers do not appear to be universal and this appears to be having a fundamental effect on how the participants recognise themselves as working within a profession.

The data indicates FE teachers recognise a strong association between discursive practices and the formation of knowledge; knowledge was prioritised by participants as a key characteristic of being a professional and the ability to act professionally if one possessed knowledge. Contrary to this, the participants also widely agree that academic knowledge as a route to

become, and maintain being, an FE teacher is not essential; this brings into question the validity of whether FE teaching can be considered a profession in its own right if the acquisition of knowledge through limited discursive practices is not encouraged or needed to work as an FE teacher.

Undoubtedly, power is one of the key characteristics of a profession. Layder (1996) associates people with being conduits, which power flows through as well as producing it. Within the sector it is clear to see from all sources that FE is highly bureaucratised. Power has steadily been gained over FE teachers, particularly with respect to observation and student achievement data, and participants clearly identify that data is their *'master'*. The bureaucratic FE landscape, identified in the research, has become more powerful through the implementation of regulations and disciplines, with the data indicating that FE teachers have become more subservient to its demands (Du Gay, 2000).

Previously, a major stakeholder in FE teacher professionalism was the government. Their attempts to exert power and control over FE teachers can be explained by Foucault's concept of *'governmentality'*; in this case power over FE teachers was centralised and policed closely through the Institute for Learning (IfL) under professional regulations. Previously, the capillaries of power extended from the government to the IfL, IfL to employers, and employers to employees. The participants clearly remember having to be a member of the IfL, and how between the government and the IfL they tried to formally professionalise FE teaching and control those who taught in the sector. This proved difficult for both parties, and it is clear that the exercising of power through trying to structure the diverse practices of FE teaching, and attempting to gather individuals to become part of a discipline, did not have the desired effect of professionalisation; as a consequence FE teachers' freedom to choose on how their professional identities were formed had been completely removed. The consequential abandonment by the government of mandatory professional membership and professional formation within five years of implementation appears to have affected the participants in a number of ways. They mainly feel that their credibility has been lost as the power and

associated status linked to professional membership and professional formation no longer exists.

With control over professionalism currently being in the hands of the employers, many employers are not exerting this right to shape FE teacher professionalism. There is an identified chasm where employers are concerned, and evidence from literature and the data suggests that they are channelling the power they do hold into performance managing staff over achievement data instead. Layder (1996) identifies that power does not belong to individuals, it is part of a network. This is particularly relevant if we consider that FE teachers as a homogenous group feel they have little power, and there is clear evidence from both the literature and data that their professional network is fractured. As a result of this it would appear that what little power they had has dissipated over time, and has been further eroded by the many stakeholders involved in FE, who are also making claims for power over FE teachers; weakening any links that FE teaching had to being defined as a profession.

Participants also question the status of the professional body the ETF. The ETF's professional standards make no reference to FE teaching being a profession, and the term is not used at all within their guidance; additionally, they failed to respond to multiple requests to be involved with this research. Many feel the ETF is tokenistic and '*without legs*' as membership is non-compulsory, and as a consequence is perceived to hold very little power and status within the sector in both its recognition as a professional body and for those who are members. Furthermore, there is limited value for employers in engaging with the ETF, since the deregulation of FE teachers, as it is perceived to be a non-essential addition; a nice to have, but not needed, in order to work in the sector. It is for this reason that it is not difficult to see why the ETF do not hold any kind of power, or ability to act as gatekeepers for FE teacher professionalism in an effective way. If we consider Foucault's ideas on meaning being constructed through social discourse, with each discourse holding power, the ETF appear to be trying to make a claim for power and authority over FE teaching as a profession but according to the data are having

limited impact. The rejection of the ETF by the majority of participants supports Foucault's assertion that the level of status of those that produce regimes of truth dictates whether they are accepted or not; in this instance the status of the ETF is low and therefore in these studies their *'truths'* regarding FE teacher professionalism are being rejected by FE teachers and their employers. Any claims they have towards elevating FE teacher professionalism and asserting power through the regulation of FE teachers is not evident in the data; what *is* evident is they lack credibility in their contribution to developing and maintaining FE teacher professionalism through low membership across the sector and, lack of recognition as gatekeepers of FE teacher professionalism. Overall, in the absence of credible gatekeepers, and consequentially no dominant group representative of FE teacher professionalism, FE teaching as a profession is further distanced from the normative accounts of a profession.

The discourse which surrounded FE teacher professionalism pre 1990s illustrates that power and status for FE teachers were at higher levels in comparison to the current day; professional frameworks and ways of working professionally were *'loose'* in terms of standards but they were recognised as such and FE teachers operated under the parameters of trust which is normally granted within a profession. The data reflects these more relaxed ways of working, which participants discussed as the '*good old days*', reflective of the golden age, where it was accepted that teachers in general had higher levels of respect and status; this also revealed that many were fearful of their teachers at school and were discouraged from questioning their authority. Many participants stated that this is an area they struggle with, in particular in their own professional practice as they expected respect in their positions as FE teachers to mirror the respect they had for teachers when they were at school. With students as consumers, and the increasing range of stakeholders, they feel that respect and status are no longer an area that forms part of being acknowledged as part of being an FE teaching professional. These narratives can also be transposed against debates on old and new professionalism from the literature; from the data there is a clear acceptance by participants that there are both established truths regarding FE teachers' professionalism, yet interestingly the participants fail to recognise that they are

'new' professionals in their current job roles. The participants appear to orientate themselves within a transient professionalism, operating between concepts of old and new professionalism, in a sector that has no clear direction on FE teacher professionalism or concrete links to being defined as a profession.

5.2.0 What is FE Teacher Professional Identity?

Foucault argues that the nature of being, ontology, comprises of three axes: the axis of ethics, the axis of power and the axis of knowledge. Throughout the research it has been identified that defining FE teacher professional identity is conceptually difficult, the main reason being that it is not something that is physical or concrete. FE teacher professional identity is an abstraction that is brought into being through discursive constructs. By utilising Foucault's 'axes' of ethics, power and knowledge with the data, there are correlations between FE teachers feeling unclear about if FE teaching is a profession and their professional identities being loose in definition; their constructions of FE teacher professional identities are not fully formed or agreed upon with regard to ethics, power and knowledge.

The majority of participants view FE teacher professional identity as problematic at a rudimentary level, and literature supports this. There appears to be no one view on what FE teacher professional identity is which is widely accepted and adopted. A repeated theme throughout the data is the difficulty in identifying whether FE teaching is a profession, and as a consequence of this, FE teachers are unclear about if they are professionals in their own right. The participants themselves have '*problematised'* this 'issue' and frequently question, and try to rationalise, how their roles have fallen into this professional wasteland; there's a sense of not belonging and an accompanying unsureness of what, and if, anything should be done about it. The characteristics that the participants associate with being a professional, in general, only serve to amplify the fact that they are not apparent for FE teachers.

In terms of ethical behaviour, the participants are in agreement about what it involves but in disagreement about how it is enacted; they provide multiple examples of unethical and unprofessional behaviour, such as swearing at

students and providing too much support for assessments, but cannot come to a general consensus as to whether these actions are right or wrong when discussed in their own working contexts.

Regarding power, mainly the reduction of it as FE teachers, all participants agree that they have severely restricted autonomy but they are unable to pinpoint exactly who is holding the power; from both inside and outside of their working environments they perceive there to be many stakeholders who control them but cannot categorically agree on who the main holder of power is. They do unanimously specify who they believe to hold no power or control over their professionalism very easily; unfortunately, this is the professional body for FE teachers, the ETF. Linking to this is the requirement for knowledge as part of working within a profession; what the participants state and accept as part of a profession, regarding individuals possessing high levels of knowledge, they do not apply consistently as a requirement for working in FE. Some participants agree that high levels of knowledge are of the utmost importance as a professional FE teacher, whereas others do not feel this is a priority; this is further impounded by deregulation. Interestingly a small section of the sample believe that any work can be professionalised, there is no requirement for it to be considered a profession; this is indicative of Macdonald's (1995) suggestions that the term *'professional/ism'* can be applied to the work being undertaken rather than the position of the person undertaking it. All these elements serve to further add to the abstractness of FE teacher professional identity in the current climate.

According to Foucault (1980: 33), truth is established through systems of 'ordered procedures for the production, regulation, distribution, circulation and operation of statements'. Interwoven with this are the political contexts and social and ideological tensions which serve to induce power and maintain it regarding accepted truths; in this case it applies to ownership of FE teacher professional identity and the struggles over who administers and oversees it. Foucault (1980: 131-2) argues that *'truths'* are exclusive and their production is limited to 'dominant if not exclusive, of a few great political and economic apparatuses' with each society possessing its own 'regime of truth' (Foucault, in Rabinow 1991). If we consider previous iterations of FE teacher

professional identity, Foucault's argument can be readily applied. Previously FE teachers had some freedom and through government intervention, during 2007-12, did have parameters for their own professional identity which enabled exclusivity. FE teachers, albeit fairly reticently, in conjunction with professional bodies and the government, formed a fairly universal truth about FE teacher professional identity up until de-regulation which served to guide how professionalism for FE teachers was enacted during daily practice. At least during one short period FE teachers knew what expectations there were as a professional and the parameters of professionalism within set frameworks, which acted to bring together a coherent professional identity for FE teachers.

Another problematic area reflected in the literature, and also by participants, is the purpose of FE. The data illustrates that the many changes in the sector over the past twenty years has had a profound effect upon how FE teachers view themselves. As the sector has evolved, where learning has become an earning model for institutions based upon marketisation, traditional notions of FE serving a moral purpose are no longer at the forefront of the education providers' offers. Marketisation of the sector has meant that establishments have to earn their money, mainly through student achievement, which participants state they felt uncomfortable with. All of the participants state that they did not enter teaching in order to churn out student achievements; they entered for altruistic reasons. In a sector previously associated with providing second chances for students and linked to being nurturing and empowering, the participants argue that the overwhelming performative aspect of their roles causes them constant conflict (Bathmaker and Avis, 2005). In accordance with Ball (2013) and Wallace (2013) constant references are made regarding stakeholders trying to quantify the unquantifiable and how this puts immeasurable pressures on teaching staff; students too (O'Leary, 2013). The participants rationalise that the current purpose of the sector adds no value to their status and professional identities, but actively detracts from it being considered a profession due to being focused on performativity.

Participants also recognise that the marketisation of FE, and the respective increasing demands from a variety of stakeholders, have contributed to this

current climate where FE teachers are in a state of uncertainty regarding their professional identities. The participants identify, in accordance with the literature, that historically teachers in general were considered professionals; they were an identifiable group with a *special* status, but this has been greatly reduced through de-professionalisation of the sector (Gleeson, 2014: Lucas, 2013). Additionally, attempts at re-professionalising have not been successful due to the voluntary nature of the process. Strict criteria for entering the profession has now been replaced by broad parameters; the data indicates that entry now is wide open and this is negatively impacting on FE teacher status. The participants identify that previously the gatekeepers of the profession were the teachers themselves, and this ensured that entry was exclusive; now, the gatekeepers have been removed and this has seriously affected the professional standing and status of FE teachers. The data illustrates that over a period of time FE teachers have become detached from being recognised as full professionals; the participants are fully aware of this disorientating situation, but feel helpless to do anything about it. For them, now, status is recognised internally by them being able to achieve good results and manage student behaviour effectively; this is in contrast historically to how FE teachers achieved a somewhat higher status through their subject knowledge, experience, and altruistic approach.

In terms of performativity, FE teachers are under observation in two forms: visual observation of their practice and reconciliation of their data. It is evident that FE teachers are under close scrutiny, mainly through individual performance management, based on student attendance, retention, and achievement. Through their organisations, the data illustrates that FE teachers feel watched, and examined, through this disciplinary form of power (Layder, 1996). Previously held utopian views of education being about people rather than numbers has been consigned to the past, despite FE teachers stating that they feel internal conflict in their work being viewed by stakeholders as quantifiable. Participants feel that they are being watched through the monitoring of data, rather than how they behave professionally; this does not sit well with them as professionalism is then measured on how successful they are in achieving the data targets. Rather than a panoptic view of their work,

where one watches many, it is apparent that many are watching the few: multiple stakeholders are watching FE teachers (Mathiesen, 1997). FE teachers state as a consequence that they are supressing their personal beliefs about the morality of education in order to achieve data targets. Participants frequently discuss their difficulties in being managed over the *'unmanageable'*, as they describe students as *not* being machines who will provide guaranteed results: this is evidenced by Anna (QT) 'I've found a real schism has opened up in my head between what I'm being paid to do and what I'm being judged on'.

The data illustrates that FE teachers feel that they have to abandon their principles in order to get results, akin to *'by any means necessary'*; unprofessional is encouraged in this form, and is accepted as part of the job. Professionally, this is viewed by employers and stakeholders as beneficial for the sector but personally FE teachers feel that this goes against their personal beliefs which influence their professional outlook. This process has been associated with pressure, performance, and consequence; teaching staff state they are controlled through surveillance and participants indicate that they are responding automatically to this form of control as part of their contractual obligations. This now appears to have developed into a normalisation of their unprofessional behaviour, despite them disagreeing with what they were being asked to do (Layder, 1996). For the majority of employers, this *'normalisation'* is immensely beneficial as predictability of FE teacher behaviour concerning achieving data targets is almost guaranteed; the participants are self-regulating despite stating that they are against the principle of it, further evidencing that they are not in control of their own professional identities or practice.

5.3.0 How Do FE Teachers Think and Act Professionally?

The lack of recognition as professionals for FE teachers can be attributed to the multiple truths identified by the participants which exist regarding current teacher professionalism. They identify these truths as being derived from the many discourses they are part of in what they consider to be a complex sector, and find developing a clear professional identity quite difficult. Instead of one

universal truth existing in relation to FE teacher professionalism, which is transmitted from a centralised dominant area, the participants identify that there are many '*grey areas*' and subjective discourses about professionalism in FE; this makes it challenging to identify as a *true* professional when compared to normative accounts of professionalism (both general professionalism and FE teacher professionalism). This draws parallels with the work of Layder (1996) who advocated that meaning is constructed through social discourse, and more than one discourse can claim to provide multiple truths, which in turn influence individuals in multiple ways; subsequently this defines a variety of practices in which individual and truths are seen from many perspectives. The sheer volume of suggestions by participants of the different characteristics, traits and practices of a professional in FE teaching (40+ suggestions) evidence that multiple truths are being enacted through working behaviours, in inconsistent ways, due to individual adoption of a raft of suggestions of what being a professional consists of amongst the discourse.

For FE teacher professionalism the formation of knowledge is fractured, the participants suggest there is one normative aspect in existence; this is the complete loss of autonomy for FE teachers in their daily practice. This is reflected in the data frequently, as the participants appear to have given up any notions of possessing autonomy and associated power; they attribute the power to the many stakeholders involved in FE who act mainly as consumers and data authoritarians. On multiple occasions participants acknowledge that as FE teachers they are ethical beings: virtuous and altruistic. They also clearly identify that there are many FE teachers who are not, and no one appears to be in control of ensuring that FE teachers exhibit ethical behaviour associated with being a professional. Participants agree that power is limited for FE teachers, and the distribution of it appears to be misplaced in a marketised sector towards employers and students who have ulterior motives. There is also the connection between knowledge and status which Foucault links to intellectualism; particularly specialist knowledge which attracts the title of being an expert in a specific area. Unfortunately, for the participants, they reveal on reflection that they are not experts in any particular area and observe that this may be having an impact on their status and how they are perceived;

they demonstrate difficulty in showing any alignment with discursive constructs and cannot fully identify with them in their daily professional practice.

The narrative in the data of trying to become *'professionalised'* as an FE teacher appears to follow a twisted path with the participants left feeling that they are not in control of their own professionalism and not being sure of who actually is. The loss of control over their professionalism is mainly met with apathy, as the participants feel that this is something that has been done to them and many are resigned to the fact that this is now how they will operate; as pseudo professionals. However, their apathy does show some signs of mental resistance, as participants talk about what they'd like to do but admit that they do not enact it; reflecting Foucault's (2001: 117) observations on where power exists, 'daily struggles at grass roots level, among those who fight was located in the fine meshes of the web of power'. This links to the discomfort the participants feel in being performance managed over their data, and the struggles they have verbally arguing discrepancies with the data; this is an aspect which they feel they have little control over due to the students being autonomous in their learning and unpredictable. Participants speak of the many stakeholders, which are ever growing in power; who seek to assert control over them, and thus reduce their autonomy. Collectively, the majority of participants feel they have relinquished control of their work and identities due to policy, legislation, and what they regard as general interference from stakeholders; many who they state would not have previously had an influence on their work, such as students and parents.

Regarding professionalism in action, and FE teacher identity, an interesting form of behaviour arose from the data which participants did not fully recognise in themselves: this behaviour is known as Impostor Syndrome. Many of the participants, regardless of their length of service and status (NQT/QT), identified with key identifiers of Impostor Syndrome: feeling fraudulent, 'faking it' until they make it, having a fear of being found out by students and parents that they weren't experienced or qualified, and suffering from internalised feelings of inadequacy (Crawford et al., 2016: Clance and Imes, 1978). Additionally, those with Impostor Syndrome have a sense of not belonging and

compare themselves less favourably to others; this was evident in the data when participants reflected their respect and status in the sector. The theme of Impostor Syndrome runs through the data as participants try to rationalise their work as professionals compared to the work of other professionals, in the absence of many factors which define a role as a profession.

Themes of 'intellectual fraud' (Crawford et al., 2016: 376) and 'inauthenticity' (Sherman, 2013: 57), relate well to the troubles in defining FE teacher professionalism within the sector; FE teachers with professional identity crises may be comparing themselves to other more established professional teachers such as those in compulsory education and HE, or other well established professions which sit outside of the sector. The majority of participants struggle with this for a variety of reasons such as: there is no requirement to belong to a professional body, gatekeeping has been severely reduced, the definition of their parameters of work are not clearly defined, and there are many stakeholders who control FE teacher behaviours and work. All of which contribute to weakening the links between FE teaching being classed as a profession, and FE teaching staff being associated fully with it. Although it is not explicit from the participants themselves, it is recognisable that many feel they are not worthy of the positions they hold, and perceive themselves to have a lower status compared to other teachers (compulsory and HE) and the professions in general. For FE teachers there are multiple, fragmented identities in existence and there appears to be no universal FE teacher professional identity that FE teachers can unanimously draw from. The difficulty in understanding themselves as professionals in the sector is evident in the data, as they struggle to *'fit in'* with multiple discourses from the government, the ETF, their employers, and normative accounts. With no one clear identity; and despite being part of a homogenous group there is no overarching dominant professional identity which serves to reduce their status and professional belonging even further.

On a final note, it is worth mentioning that there are opportunities for unprofessionalism within the sector, and participants were keen to point it out during data collection. They identify varying behaviours between FE teachers,

from the virtuous to the unethical, and exhibit an uneasiness regarding repercussions for those who are deemed to be unprofessional. They reveal that the sector is apathetic to unprofessionalism unless it affects achievement data, or funding streams; intervention is then identified as being swift from the employers, an expected reaction in a marketised sector. For all other misdemeanours, the participants state that there seems to be a lack of consequence which could be attributed to their being no overarching governing professional body since deregulation. There are implications to this, as the judgement of unprofessional behaviour now falls to the stakeholders of a marketised sector; mainly students, parents and employers. Perceived levels of unprofessionalism are entirely subjective and the data shows that FE teachers are being pulled in many directions over perceived levels of unprofessionalism, of which FE teachers previously would not have tolerated. The participants agree that if the professional body had more visibility and influence in the sector and membership was mandatory, then they would feel more professional and guidelines/standards would be there to adhere to; in light of this transient phase of FE teacher professionalism it is not surprising that the participants are seeking a uniform structure to work within.

5.4.0 Concluding Remarks

There is little doubt that professional identity for FE teachers is fractured, as the data illustrates that the participants are very clear about what constitutes a profession and professional in general, yet they struggle to align and apply these constructs to their own work and practice. A key component of forming and developing a professional identity lies with process and procedures associated with a standardised professional framework; a framework accepted by the majority of interested parties which forms and shapes the distinct professional discourse and language associated with a particular role. In addition to this, through self-mastery and by gaining specialist knowledge, individuals act to construct their professional identities further. This is in alignment with models of professionalism which indicate key characteristics and traits that define what is a ‘profession’, and who is a ‘professional’.

The research findings indicate that possessing knowledge, and specialist knowledge, is featured highly by participants as a key attribute of being identified as a professional. The participants systematically mourn the loss of requiring knowledge as part of being recognised as a professional FE teacher, and as a consequence this appears to be impacting upon FE teacher professional identity. In Layder's (1996) advancement upon Foucault's theories on the formation of identities through axes, Layder (1996: 119) proposed that the many social discourses that individuals are part of, result in the self, becoming a 'product of cross cutting discourses and practices'. Identity grows from the discourses and practices from which individuals are 'enmeshed' (Layder, 1996: 63), and this is demonstrated throughout the data as participants reveal they are part of several discourses, some of which promote FE teacher professionalism and many which do not. This can be linked to the promotion and subsequent demotion of professionalism in FE by different governments, which participants feel has now impacted on their professional identities; resultant on them becoming 'fragmentary' and multiple'; lacking real definition and subject to 'unconscious forces' (Layder, 1996:119).

The findings support the validity of Hoyle's (1972) work on the professions, who argues that teaching does not fit into the constructs of a profession. Hoyle (1972) proffers that teaching is more closely aligned with an occupation and will need to be redefined as it has grown into a hybrid of roles which do not make teaching a profession in its own right, therefore impacting upon normative accounts of professionalism for FE teachers. Weight to this argument can also be added from Freidson (2004) who identified that specialisation in work illustrates the difference between an occupation and a profession. The data indicates that there is little specialisation in an FE teachers work since deregulation, and FE teacher's work has indeed become more generalised. Many of the research participants feel that they were forced into formal professionalisation, which is now defunct, and are now operating in a 'no man's land' of FE teacher professionalism, which has no clear views of what it should look and feel like in practice; this is very disorientating for FE teachers when they look to other professions to see how their professional frameworks are being enacted.

Finally, Greenwood's (1957: 45-48) professional continuum further cements the suggestion that teaching is not a profession as the parameters of teachers' work in Greenwood's framework are not apparent or promoted in FE teaching (Table 3). Greenwood's (1957) indicators of a profession are stated consistently by the participants as what they believe a profession is defined by, yet when FE teaching is discussed the participants consistently list the opposite of the indicators as a guide to define their work as a profession; this includes a lack of autonomy, qualifications, experience, knowledge, and low pay and status. Despite acknowledging that many aspects of their work have been de-professionalised since deregulation, citing examples of this mainly being a reduction in their freedom, the participants fail to see that FE teaching now has weak links to being identified as a profession when compared against normative accounts of professions and models of professionalism.

Chapter 6. Conclusion and Recommendations

6.0.0 Introduction

This qualitative study explored how FE teachers shape their professional identities, identified surrounding factors and influences which FE teachers use to orientate themselves professionally within the sector, and discussed whether FE teaching in its current form can be defined distinctly as a profession or occupation. It was clear from the initial review of the literature, and from possession of insider knowledge that there were, and still are, issues in how FE teaching is aligned to normative accounts of a profession, and how FE teachers enact professionalism in these unusual circumstances.

The research focused on utilising FE teacher voices from within an FE organisation to determine how FE teachers perceived themselves as professionals, and orientated themselves professionally in the sector. In using FE teacher voices, this addressed a specific gap in literature concerning the formation and adoption of FE teacher identities beyond the realm of descriptive, professional practice literature, and normative accounts of professionalism in general. The research itself utilised, in part, a Foucauldian lens and was framed by the work of key authors of professional frameworks and models; both general and teacher specific. These frameworks and models were all implicit in defining an alternative perspective on how FE teaching defines itself amongst professions and occupations, and offered suggestions on how FE teacher professional identities are formed in the current sector. The findings of the research substantially illuminate what it is like to be an FE teacher in the current climate, with uncertain professional parameters which are impactful, and demonstrate how lost FE teachers feel within their own professionalism.

6.1.0 Contribution of the Research

The voices of FE teachers expressed the divisive effects of marketisation of FE, and operating under such a performative regime raised key issues with how professional identities are formed under these circumstances: these issues were the distribution of power and control, professional identity, and gatekeeping within the professions. Notions of education being for the public

good being replaced with the principles of education for economic growth linked to funding regimes, this has had far reaching implications for FE teachers in their approaches to how they act as professionals; their confusion regarding their professional identities are clear throughout the data.

The sector and its teaching staff have evolved to become more tightly bound to government policy and regulation; FE teachers demonstrate that they are multi-faceted and subject to an unsurmountable growing list of roles and responsibilities as policy and regulation constantly change. It is for this reason that it is difficult to clearly locate where FE teachers sit within professional frameworks due to the points of reference being unclear and unregulated. This lack of clarity has resulted in FE teachers having difficulty in identifying in their practice within normative accounts of a profession, and applying standardised professional frameworks to their work as the sector; FE teacher identities are unquestionably ambiguous.

The two main findings from the research were:

> FE teachers are clear about what a profession is, and how professionals should behave but have difficulty in applying professional frameworks against their hybrid roles.
>
> FE teachers aspire to become recognised as working within a profession but their lack of power ensures that in practice, this is not likely to happen. This research found that FE teaching is better categorised as an occupation which tries to act professionally. Acting professionally does not constitute a profession.

Additional key findings were:

> The purpose of the FE sector has become performative and FE teachers are struggling with the morality of this development against normative accounts about the purpose of post compulsory education.
>
> There are multiple competing discourses of power which FE teachers are part of and this is a major factor in the disempowerment they are experiencing. Disempowerment has facilitated feelings of Impostor Syndrome which is impacting on FE teachers' daily practice.
>
> FE teachers are signalling that they want to be part of a recognised, credible professional group which fully represents their interests and cements their status as professionals.

The research has highlighted a struggle between the required sense of professionalism among FE teachers and a lack of recent government direction and employer input into the maintenance of a professional framework. The literature indicates that there have been many incidences of turbulence within the sector with resulting crises and settlements, and at this point in time the data leads me to believe that there is a 'crisis' surrounding the formation and maintenance of FE teacher professional identities. Traditional crises and settlements over pay and working conditions are now brought into question by a lack of standardisation of FE teacher professionalism in the sector; there are tangible links between the professional standardisation in the sector and supressed pay and working conditions which have been exploited by employers as a result of professional deregulation in 2012.

6.2.0 FE Teacher Professionalism in Today's Sector

Prior to a marketised FE sector, FE teachers' focus was aimed at betterment of individuals for public good. The pressure of competing for funding, as the sector functions as a business, has had a detrimental effect upon FE teaching staff, resulting in a metric driven sector which appears to have greatly reduced individual autonomy as a result. Notions of empowering students and developing them as individuals have been replaced with the aggressive practice of ensuring wide scale achievements at all costs, in order to secure funding and ensure that education providers are financially viable. The data illustrates that FE teachers are deeply uncomfortable with this ethos and way of working, this too is reflected in the current literature, yet there appears to be no sign of these practices subsiding in a sector that is classed as financially poor and increasingly having to operate with reduced funding.

There are many ways in which an FE teacher's work can be measured, and in response to this it appears that FE teachers, despite abhorring these practices of gaining achievements at all costs, are now compliant in ensuring that everyone achieves regardless of the student ability and behaviour. FE teachers feel that such behaviour is morally wrong, such as harassing students for outcomes, yet state they feel powerless to argue against the educational *'machine'* in operation. FE teachers feel that their collective voice is not strong

enough against a growing number of empowered stakeholders. My research suggests that if FE teachers were able to form a stronger, collective professional identity, they may be able to assert more autonomy and control of their work. The situation that my research found was a fractured sense of identity and a lack of control over their work, and confusion around FE teacher professional identity.

As a professional body for FE teachers, the ETF have tried to stake a claim on what they think FE teacher professionalism is, but as a voluntary professional body with little encouragement from employers, both literature and data suggest the organisation has 'no teeth' and are not representative of the sector (AELP, 2018). For a professional body which claims to set and promote professional standards, and lead workforce development, there was relatively little engagement with the ETF among participants in this research with only four out of twenty seven being members. The data tells a story of confused parameters of professionalism, as FE teachers moved from an intense period of scrutiny from the government to then have it withdrawn and the scrutiny passed on to employers in quick succession. As a professional body the ETF, which succeeded the IfL, appears to lack a mandate from government, employers and teachers; this has further alienated FE teachers who want a credible professional body which represents them.

It is already evident in this research that FE teacher roles consist of many sub-roles: a consequence of this is that FE teachers have also become involved in multiple professional and occupational discourses. The power of those discourses is acknowledged in this research. Power associated with discourse consists of specialist knowledge, and is closely linked to practice; it becomes powerful when the knowledge, language and practices become universal and shared within specialist groups, but the data indicates that for FE teachers there is no dominant discourse regarding their practice and they feel exposed to many discourses. This is through politics, institutions and the media; these are often referred to as being competitive and combative in terms of defining and enacting a profession and professionalism. Having a dominant discourse supports the empowerment of those who identify strongly with it, but the data

indicates that being part of many discourses has served to disempower the participants as they feel at the mercy of many. Both Freidson (2004) and Hoyle (1972) argue that the dominant discourse of professionalism, and specialisms, generate power, prestige and status, yet these attributes are not evident in the data when participants discuss multiple and competing discourses. The participants talk about other professions as having these attributes, and clearly identify them being absent from FE teaching; for them, their professionalism is about compliance thus negating any notions of power associated with FE teaching being considered a profession.

Prior to the 1990s, FE teachers did possess a level of autonomy in their day to day teaching and professional practice, which has gradually been eroded as decision making has been almost entirely removed; for some participants this has eroded to the point of only being able to change a lesson plan and nothing more outside of that. My data consistently shows that FE teachers are at odds with what they are able to control particularly since the implementations of the Lingfield Report and the high level of intervention from the government, and their employers, regarding student achievements linked to funding. Layder (1996) argues that individuals are objects of many tensions and forces which pull them in many different directions. This is particularly evident for FE teachers who now appear to have very little control over their work and stakeholders are named consistently as being the key holders of power; participants in this research felt powerless in challenging this. The performative aspects of the role have eliminated any hopes of FE teachers having an element of substantive control.

6.3.0 The Future of FE Teacher Professionalism

Within research on FE teacher professionalism, we might expect there to be a dominant discourse, yet it is notable by its absence. The data and literature tells us that FE teachers are being pulled into a powerful business discourse through the marketisation of education, and alongside the supplementary discourses they are part of, it would appear that professionalism discourses are not emerging or being prioritised for FE teachers. The participants know that they should be part of discourses on professionalism, they want to be part

of them, but the performative measures which are in place appear to be superseding any hope of this occurring in the current FE climate. Currently, there are many pockets of discourse and practice which do not form a consistent view or professional framework. Looking to the future, mandatory professional membership and professional formation could re-establish a form of professional gatekeeping, barring 'others' from having influential stakes in FE teacher professionalism.

Overwhelmingly in the data, participants identified characteristics of a general profession and professional which aligned with the frameworks of Freidson (2004), Hoyle (1972) and Greenwood (1957). There was no ambiguity on the identifiers and behaviours, and examples were frequently given on what the participants believed to be 'true' professions such as lawyers and doctors. Difficulties arose when the participants tried to align their diverse work, and the restrictions in the role, to models of a profession and professionalism; they clearly recognised that their practice was not convergent with a profession but did not identify explicitly it was an occupation. To counteract this *'distance'* that has emerged between FE teaching and professions, it is suggested that a new professionalism be adopted by the overseeing professional body which encompasses the layered roles and identities that FE teachers and their work comprises of. Rather than being an employer led professional body, it needs to be professional led, to support the formation and development of professional identities in the first instance rather than basing a professional framework on the performative aspects of working in the sector; the ETF's current offer bases itself upon the work of FE teachers, rather than their identities, and is too generic in nature to be of realistic use as a professional framework for FE teachers in its current form. In an ever complex education landscape, the simplistic indicators of a profession are not entirely feasible or applicable to FE teaching but the offer from the ETF does not helpfully provide a solution either due to its lack of recognition through its narratives of teaching as a profession; the organisation needs to make it clear whether it defines FE teaching as a profession, or stake a claim in offering their version on what FE teaching is defined as.

The lines of separation between occupation and profession are somewhat blurred for FE teachers due to the development of the sector and roles and currently there is no place where FE teaching and teachers sit comfortably in being defined as a profession and professionals, although it is clearly evident that the majority of FE teachers strive for, and try to act professionally. One specific area which could start to address this issue is within the initial teacher training qualifications, and education and training curricula; these qualifications both include the subject area of professions and professionalism. As with early years and nursing qualifications, this is an opportunity to replicate what their specific professional bodies have created within these curriculums and are mandatory inclusions; to impart knowledge, embed professional frameworks, and set a clear expectation of competencies based upon the directives from the professional bodies. This sends a consistent and clear message to students of the parameters of their work, and how their identities are shaped and developed in line with a set of agreed expectations; currently this is a missed opportunity by the ETF.

6.4.0 Proposal for a Professional Path for FE teachers

As an insider, and also as a result of the findings, this provided an opportunity to put forward a proposal for a future professional pathway which suits the diversity of the sector teaching staff. Professionalism for FE teachers in the past appears to be based upon a product rather than a process ie: you collect the required evidence and achieve the qualifications, and then you hopefully achieve the status. The issue with a product being the end goal (award of status) is that it does not acknowledge the many varied entry points that FE teachers enter from. Currency of award also becomes an issue, therefore making it conceptually difficult to create a process which addresses and supports these nuances associated with the sector. It would appear that these difficulties are probably why what has gone before, in terms of standards and frameworks, have not been successful and also may be the reason why there is no credible offer in existence currently; it is a very difficult concept to get right in the sector in order to be inclusive for the variance of staff who teach within it.

As a reflexive researcher, it was important to me to think about what had gone before in terms of FE teacher professionalism; what worked, what did not work, and how could a professional framework be proposed that did not replicate previous iterations, with the focus for a proposal being based upon on theory and my research findings. By utilising the literature, data, and what participants had exclusively said they wanted, I arrived at developing a proposal to encompass all of these elements. The proposal breaks down the entry points and development areas for FE teachers in terms of professionalising their work; highlighting the flexibility needed for staff who have differing points of entry, and breaking down the hierarchy between people with experience and people with qualifications. The proposal offered also pieces all these elements together, but I do recognise and acknowledge that these suggestions may not be accepted in the current climate of deregulation. To test the proposal, I invited three critical friends to review the suggestions, one UQT and two QTs; their working environments involved teaching and training in the PCET sector, FE, HE and private sector. Two main observations came from their critiques of the proposal:

> Now the sector has been deregulated, they felt that it will prove very difficult to regulate again.
>
> They have observed that since deregulation, employers are enjoying the rewards of it through ease of recruitment and lower pay awards, and they will not easily move to a regulated sector which will financially penalise them.

Praise for the proposal was given in terms of there being a requirement for teachers to be qualified to teach by holding a teaching qualification, and the suggestion of completing a portfolio of evidence which is yearly renewed through peer review. They felt that this ensured quality and currency through yearly submissions and agreed that this would be a start in becoming recognised as professional teachers.

In order to offer a proposal for a professional path, it is useful to look at what is in existence currently within the sector. The ETF claim that they are the professional body for those who work within the sector, but their mission statement fails to provide references to working on behalf of FE staff and

clearly represents the needs of other stakeholders, mainly the government, employers and students as evidenced in their mission statement:

> The Education and Training Foundation (ETF) is the sector-owned, government-backed workforce development body for the Further Education and Training sector. Its role is to commission and deliver professional learning and development for teachers, leaders and trainers to support government policy and meet sector needs. Our charitable purpose is to improve education and training for learners aged 14 and over (ETF, ND: np).

Other points of reference for professionalism for FE staff are the organisations they work for; this is in the form of contracts under terms and conditions of employment, and also job descriptions. The issue with these are that they are a list of what work is expected to be carried out as part of the role and do not provide a coherent, universal professional framework for FE teachers to work within, and develop their professionalism specifically.

It is also useful to look at what is in existence and could be *borrowed* from other educational sectors. Within compulsory education, the TRA regulate teachers through a set of compulsory standards for teachers and teacher registration; this is on behalf of the Secretary of State and the DfE (TRA, ND). Within Part Two of the Teachers' Standards there is an entire section dedicated to personal and professional conduct (DfE, 2013b). This section, in detail, lists and describes the behaviours and attitudes expected of a teacher within the sector (see below) and failure to adhere to these may result in misconduct hearings to determine if the profession has been brought into disrepute (TRA, 2018).

> A teacher is expected to demonstrate consistently high standards of personal and professional conduct. The following statements define the behaviour and attitudes which set the required standard for conduct throughout a teacher's career (DfE, 2013b: 14).

Within HE, a voluntary membership and professional framework is in place through the HEA (HEA, 2011). Not dissimilar to the ETF offer, the HEA have categories of membership which are awarded upon completion of a portfolio; despite the similarities, the most recognisable difference between the ETF's

offer and the HEA's offer is that the HEA appears to have more credibility and uptake from teaching staff and their employers in spite of using a voluntary membership model. This could be attributed to the HEA being established for a longer period than the ETF, 15 years, and their professional standards framework (UKPSF) being highly detailed on evidence requirements for entry and subsequent different types of membership.

Whilst discussing the other professional bodies, it is useful to return to the dual and tripartite models for professionalism. The aspects of the of the dual and tripartite models are evident in the professional bodies organisation of their standards and frameworks into two and three strands. Normative accounts of what it is to be a professional can be crudely split into three categories: education/knowledge, control, and behaviour/s. Subsequently, these categories then influence how individuals behave within the workplace (professionalism) and this impacts on professional identity formation, and development. Within the literature in general, there is evidence across the education sector as a whole that today's teachers can be classified as dual or tri-professionals. Within their specific literature, the ETF refer to dual professionalism frequently; 'dual professionals'; they are both subject and/or vocational specialists and experts in teaching and learning' (ETF, 2014: 1). Their predecessors, the IfL, previously alluded to supporting triple professionalism; a concept that the ETF still share information on within their literature, but do not currently appear to actively promote. It is of interest that a substantial piece on triple professionalism from 2014, which is available on their website, has not come to fruition as yet:

> Professor Spours suggested that an approach of 'triple professionalism' could help us to change this. By triple professionalism, he meant the ability of professionals to be experts in their own profession or subject area; to be inspirational and expert teachers; and to be able to work with other social partners, particularly in their locality or region. This approach to professionalism could be characterised as democratic, activist and ecological, and could underpin the co-production of knowledge and professional development, with leadership being seen in a supportive role. Triple professionalism would be ethically driven, but would require support in terms of:

- a longer time for initial teacher training
- new demands for the skills of teachers and the need to have a master's degree
- expansive work environments
- local, national and international communities of practice focused on improving teaching and learning
- local democratic accountability
- inspection focused on improvement
- a national college of educators (Spours cited in IfL, 2014: 10).

Post deregulation, it is not difficult to see why triple professionalism has not been embraced in a sector where value for money and funding cuts are the norm; there is little room for the concept of triple professionalism to be accepted and developed. Despite this, the research participants indicated that there are many elements of their work which can be associated with triple professionalism such as their expansive work environments and inspection focused on improvement. Many of the suggestions made by them on how to improve their professional status and value also link to being qualified as teachers, and having higher level teaching and subject specialist qualifications. They are also keen to have a credible professional body which is actively involved in wide communities of practice to address the diversity of the workforce; participants are signalling that triple professionalism is where their professionalism sits and should be nurtured from.

To add context as to how professional behaviours are presented to individuals across the sectors, the following offers for each sector are discussed below in terms of their similarities and differences:

Compulsory sector (TRA):

Teaching staff must be qualified in order to teach and spend a year post qualification, classed as an NQT year, working under supervision. Additionally, they must be registered with the TRA and be visible on the active register. The mandatory professional standards are split into two categories: Teaching and Conduct. Despite there being only two categories, the Teaching category succinctly covers knowledge and skills also. It is of interest that there is a specific category for conduct and behaviour within the profession which if

not adhered to carries the threat of expulsion; this is not apparent in the FE and HE frameworks. PCET frameworks are more closely aligned to practice and its impact on individual student achievement (TRA, 2018: DfE, 2013b).

FE sector (ETF):

Teaching staff are not required to be qualified or registered in order to teach in the sector although both are encouraged by the voluntary professional body, the ETF. The ETF's professional standards are split into three categories: Values and Attributes, Knowledge and Understanding, Skills (ETF, 2014). One particular standard which stands out is number 12; understand the teaching and professional role and your responsibilities (Appendix II). Within education, literature states that as part of assessment practices the use of the word '*understand'* is to be avoided, as it is difficult to determine if an individual has understood something fully and the term itself lacks the ability to be measurable. This standard in itself is extremely difficult to navigate in terms of interpretation and what is required, with the ETF providing little explanation as to what *'professional'* and *'professionalism'* consists of, or means, as a starting point within the professional standards booklet. On further research, in the Professional Standards Framework booklet, there are three statements which attempt to explain standard number 12 but still do not offer a version of a professional or professionalism for which this is based upon (fig. 9).

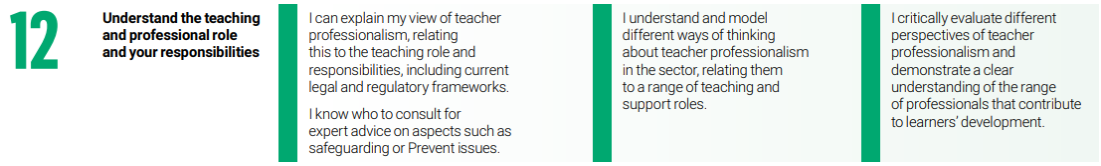


Figure 9. – ETF Professional Standard number 12 (ETF, 2014: 5).

HE sector (HEA):

As with FE, teaching staff are not required to be qualified or registered in order to teach in the sector, although it is highly unlikely that teaching staff are employed if they are not highly knowledgeable in their specific subject area/s. The HEA (Advance HE), as with the ETF, are a voluntary professional body who provide a professional standards framework called the UKPSF (HEA,

2011). This framework consists of three categories: Knowledge, Values, Activity. The categories focus heavily on evidencing *'good standing'* in all areas and pay particular attention to enacting professional values as a teacher within the sector. The HEA have provided an extensive foregrounding within their resources, information and guidance on why professional recognition is important and valued from a variety of stakeholders, such as students and employers; this I believe may be why the buy in from employers is strong within the sector compared to the ETF's offer. Although similar in nature as a voluntary, three category approach, the HEA's offer appears to be much more successful and recognised compared to the ETF's; therefore a proposal for a professional path will utilise some of the HEA's approach to organising professionalism.

Before proposing a pathway, it is pertinent to return to the participant's narratives regarding this area. Professional status, credibility, and membership were a key theme within the narratives from all categories of FE teachers who took part in the study. The points below were the key suggestions and requirements from the participants regarding raising the professional status and credibility of themselves as FE teachers:

- They want a credible professional body that is run by FE teachers and educationalists, for FE teachers and support staff
- They want a form of compulsory professional membership, of which the professional body is not expensive or free to join
- They want a professional framework/path/journey which is achievable and does not create additional work but serves to complement existing work
- They want flexibility and options regarding a professional framework/path/journey which acknowledges the diversity of the staff who enter/work within the sector
- They want their employers to have to adhere to a set of professional standards regarding teaching and support staff and for it to form part of their employment contracts and job descriptions
- They want all FE teachers to be qualified in both their specialist area/subject and education/teaching
- They want their work/practice to be regularly and independently checked by experts and specialists (not just by Ofsted or formal organisational inspection)

- They want a community of practice that is recognisable, credible, and relatable to FE teachers' work and sector issues
- They want professional recognition and accreditation from both inside and outside of the sector so that their professionalism is universally recognised and understood
- In terms of status, recognition and pay, they want parity with teachers from other sectors
- They want support to achieve, maintain, and develop their professional status from their employers and a professional body

On review of the previous professional bodies for FE, it is evident that none of the professional body names incorporated the word *'professional'* or *'professionalism'*. This first point of recognition did appear within the data, with participants stating that previous professional body names were misleading, confusing, and not representative of what they were overseeing; not having the words *'professional', 'professionalism'* or *'teacher'* in the professional body's name, they felt was a mistake by the organisations and added to the lack of value and status. With this in mind, the proposed name of a professional body for FE teachers is **The Alliance of Professional Teachers (APT)** which acknowledges the importance of having the word *'professional'* included, and also recognises that the body is for teachers who work together as an alliance with a mission statement of: **To represent, recognise, and reward all teachers in the post compulsory sector.** Critical friends who reviewed the name and mission statement agreed that it is more representative of teachers who work in the sector in schools (post 14 year olds), FE, HE, and the private sector.

The proposed overarching principles of the professional body are based upon accounts of triple professionalism, which are more relevant to the diverse work of staff in the sector:

1. **Be highly qualified in both teaching and subject knowledge**
2. **Be a member of a professional body both teaching and subject Specific, and abide by the standards**
3. **Have a current CPD/teaching practice record which is validated yearly.**

The three strands of the professional path are explained in more detail below, although it must be acknowledged that these suggestions are not exhaustive as this proposal serves to form a brief outline as a starting point for further discussion. It is proposed that staff join the professional body for a nominal fee and initially they are a Member until their portfolio of evidence is submitted and reviewed. Once reviewed, and status is conferred, then a member becomes a Continuing Member and referred to as a Certified Professional Teacher. Certified Professional Teacher is held upon a yearly portfolio submission, if not completed then status reverts back to Member. As part of a register, this shows to employers and stakeholders the status of a future/existing staff member and signals currency in a teacher's education, knowledge and practice through regular verification.

Proposed Professional Pathway	
1. Be highly qualified in both teaching and subject knowledge	
Teaching **Working towards or achieved any listed below (or equivalent).**	**Subject specific** **You must be two levels above the level you are regularly teaching and in the same subject area and hold English and Maths at L2 or above (or equivalent). Equivalents to levels are acceptable.**
L3 Award in Education and Training L4 Certificate in Education and Training L5 Diploma in Education and Training Certificate in Education PGCE	L2 subject specific qualification. L3 subject specific qualification. L4 subject specific qualification. L5 subject specific qualification. L6 subject specific qualification. L7 subject specific qualification. Foundation Degree Ordinary Degree Honours Degree Masters PhD

2. Be a member of a professional body both teaching and subject specific and abide by the standards and values	
Teaching **You must be a member of a professional body which represents teachers and teaching.** Member of the APT (or equivalent) **or** Continuing Member of the APT (or equivalent) **All listed below are required** Hold a registration/membership number which is live on the professional body's register Have a peer mentor who is a member of a professional body which represents teachers and teaching	**Subject specific** **You must be a member of a professional body/organisation which represents your specialist subject/s.** Current member of your subject specific professional body/organisation **All listed below are required** Hold a registration/membership number or user name Subscribe to regular subject specific updates

3. Have a current CPD/teaching practice record which is validated yearly.
The record is in the form of an e-portfolio which is prepopulated with relevant sections and submitted a year after teaching professional body registration. **After submission, if achieved, then individual is a Continuing Member of The APT and a Certified Professional Teacher (CPT).** **All listed below are required** Evidence of two peer observations (one subject specific, one in a different subject to what you teach, these can be inside or outside of your organisation) Evidence of two of your own sessions being observed by your peer mentor or another peer mentor of your choice who is recognised by the teaching professional body Evidence of student voice and/or acting upon student feedback Evidence of any innovation and/or enhancement/creativity you have used in your practice and its impact Evidence of any additional duties you have carried out

Evidence of any training/education you have undertaken and an evaluation of the impact Evidence of sharing good practice Evidence of any awards or recognition you have received in your role Reflection and evaluation on your year which indicates areas of good practice and areas to develop for the next year A set of action points and how the actions are to be approached which is reviewed by your peer mentor or another peer mentor of your choice who is recognised by the teaching professional body Peer review of all of the above by your peer mentor or another peer mentor of your choice who is recognised by the teaching professional body

Table 16. – Proposed professional pathway for FE teachers

In proposing a pathway for FE teachers, it is important to acknowledge that there have been previous attempts with varying degrees of success. Critical friends have already pointed out the two main barriers for a functional professional pathway based upon their working knowledge of the sector, but they have also agreed that the suggestions below provide multiple examples of how this proposal differs from what has gone before. These examples (below), they feel, could improve the chances of success for FE teachers in standardising their professionalism under a unified body.

The Alliance of Professional Teachers (APT) (proposal)	
Professional body	Independent from the government and other educational bodies such as Ofsted FE teacher led, made up entirely of FE teachers and support staff, with strong representation throughout each region – an expected allocation of peer mentors would be available per organisation More distinct communities of practice can be created both inside and outside of organisations The professional body name is associated with professionalism Nominal fee for members as the majority of work is done by members as part of bench reduction for mentoring and engaging with CPD – this work

	forms part of their portfolio submission and evidence of CPD There is a centralised, current, and checkable register for FE teachers
Employer	Reduce benchmark to allow staff time to reflect, set targets, and compile portfolios Opportunity to link portfolios to appraisal evidence of CPD and enhancement
Teaching and Learning	The professional pathway embedded into teaching qualifications so the pathway becomes instantly recognisable and transferable from theory into practice and provides parity for standards which are adhered to in other sectors Flexible qualification/s requirements for joining the professional body
Quality and credibility	E-portfolio evidence is based upon practice not data E-portfolio is pre-populated online therefore easier and quicker to complete Flexible portfolio submission dates Yearly portfolio submission supports currency in all areas Practice and quality is endorsed through peer portfolio review Portfolio supports appraisal evidence Peer mentors would be professional body members and also likely to be PGCE mentors

Table 17. Benefits of a proposed professional pathway.

6.5.0 Significance of the Research for Future Practice

These findings may be of use for the specific professional bodies, coaches, mentors, teacher training teachers, and FE teachers themselves who wish to gain an insight into the complex nature of how professional identities are formed in the FE sector. It is hoped that all categories of FE teachers would find this work particularly useful as a point of reference on the adoption and rejection of professional constructs, and to provide reassurance on the issues associated with FE teacher identity such as Impostor Syndrome.

A robust starting point for developing a framework for formally professionalising FE teaching would be to utilise the relatively new tripartite concept of professionalism, which is emergent in teaching, and requires refinement *for* FE teachers (Burford et al., 2014: Van De Camp et al., 2004: Hodges et al., 2011); this should be in conjunction with reimplementation of mandatory professional membership and professional formation. The tripartite concept reflects the layered identities that FE teachers possess and provides a more realistic framework associated with bridging the gap between professions and occupations, and professionalising occupations. The mandatory adherence to universal professional standards and promotion of sanctions may serve to professionalise the sector and align professional standards so that they are universal. Additionally, the majority of participants suggested this route would be the best option to formalise professionalism for FE teachers and increase status despite there being opposition previously when this route was formerly enacted; post deregulation, FE teachers now believe that mandatory professional formation was a better option.

Secondly, deregulation has had a major impact upon how FE teachers view themselves as professionals and indicates that their credibility is brought into question, as there are currently no formal requirements to be an FE teacher unless an employer states them. As a consequence of this, FE teachers are fearful of being *'found out'*, a well-known *'secret'* within FE, and in such an important role there is inner conflict for FE teachers on the lack of regulation and standardisation within the sector. In order to address this mounting issue, all participants suggested (as above) that professional membership should be

returned to a mandatory requirement in line with other professions; therefore, to practice as an FE teacher, you must be a member of a professional body and hold some form of licence to practice gained through evidencing qualifications, knowledge and experience. Moving on from the attempts at professional regulation pre 2012, the tripartite approach to professionalism would be a more suitable fit for FE teachers' work and formation/development of their professional identities. This recommendation can only serve to increase the credibility of FE teachers amongst each other and the sector, although it is accepted that in general the public do not know that FE teachers are practising unqualified and unlicensed due to there being an assumption that all teachers are qualified.

In addition to the significance of general areas for future practice, it is pertinent to acknowledge the significance of the research on my personal practice as an educator. Undertaking this research as an insider, has undoubtedly changed me in a number of positive ways; both professionally, and personally. At the start of undertaking the research, I was unaware that I had a fixed mindset; the research has developed a growth mindset and supported me over time to critique and ask questions rather than accept conclusive statements. I have grown as an independent thinker, and with this, so too has my confidence in challenging the rhetoric with a newly developed flexible mode of thinking. The experience of this learning journey has deepened my reflexivity, grounded in my experience, which now supports me to generate new knowledge within the multiple discourses of professionalism in education; I am now confident to be a part of this and share my knowledge to support practice.

6.6.0 Further Areas for Research

In reflecting on the strengths of the research, despite being a singular case study, this research has provided a wide variety of voices from within the sector. For the main data collection, the data focused on FE teachers solely but this involved a robust cross section of NQTs/QTs with varying length of service, subject areas, and organisations; this I feel offered an authentic voice of FE teachers at that particular time. Using a qualitative approach really supported engagement of the participants as they could speak freely about

their roles and issues within the sector; the sources of data are rich and do reflect the difficulties they have in identifying who they are as professionals. The complexity of FE teacher professionalism is apparent from their narratives and is reflective of the undercurrent of dissatisfaction regarding their that is evident today within the literature. Their voices illuminate an issue which is evident across multiple organisations and sectors, and not limited to one organisation in isolation.

It is recognised that this research was carried out in an area of high deprivation, therefore it would be of interest to replicate the study in an area of prosperity to determine if FE teachers have the same feelings about their professional identities and status. The participants involved in this research also worked across other sectors: schools, FE, and HE. Further research could be carried out with participants who worked in one sector only and used as a comparison to determine if different sectors view professionalism differently when cross sector working is not carried out.

In terms of FE teacher professionalism, this research offers further opportunities to explore and expand on what has been found in regard to FE teacher professional identities. Participants were keen to offer ideas on what they thought a profession consisted of, which did align with normative accounts, further exploration could be carried out on the inconsistent answers as to what teaching as a profession consists of; this could then be utilised to offer more consistent suggestions in building a professional framework for FE teachers for them to formulate and build their identities upon.

The participants also showed signs of Impostor Syndrome whilst carrying out their work, which linked to beliefs they had about themselves as teachers. Further research would be beneficial in looking further as to where these feelings emerge from and what the impact is personally and professionally. The formation of strategies could then be suggested and reviewed to support those who have these feelings, and opportunities for embedding them could be applied to ITT curriculums.

6.7.0 Concluding Remarks

FE teacher professionalism has been placed under immense scrutiny over the past 30 years, and much of the input in forming and reforming the professional frameworks has been taken out of FE teacher's hands. The policies, standards and regulations all seek to improve professionalism in FE, but what they fail to account for is that FE teaching does not readily align to normative accounts of a profession, and therefore FE teachers' work may suffer as a consequence in terms of clarity of behaviours and actions. The diversity of FE teaching has not provided an easy fit into established models and frameworks of professionalism; this is evident from the sheer volume of literature now appearing on this issue and the *'fracturedness'* of FE teacher professional identities that currently exist. Existing literature has previously approached the many professional identities of FE teachers, but failed to address and provide a workable professional framework for those who have many interlinked roles and respective identities in the absence of FE teaching being associated with a fully formed profession. By offering a proposal based upon the professional challenges FE teachers face, and navigate, on a daily basis it is hoped that this will add to the current discourse which has steadily built during the six years of this research being undertaken.

Forming and reforming of professional identities is particularly challenging when there are inadequate points of reference. In recent years the sector has become highly visible and participants associate this visibility with education evolving to now being a service and having to *prove* themselves in relation to data achievement, and fulfilling government targets; this is in order to sustain a good record as they operate in an open sector. The traditions of education being for public good and serving a moral purpose are widely debated by all participants as they feel that they are repressing their values in order to 'deliver' the goods sought of them regardless of the students' capabilities.

The government's deregulation of the sector, under the guise of offering *choice* in professionalism, has had far reaching ramifications on FE teacher identities which are now at a point where is little corroboration on what they are as a whole. As it currently stands, FE teacher identities are highly individualised

and to be recognised as professionals there needs to be some form of consistency. In carrying out this research, FE teachers have been given a voice to rationalise who they are professionally and what has led them to form their teacher identities. It is vastly complex as there are so many influences on FE teachers, this provides a clear rationale as to why previous attempts to professionalise it have not been successful. FE teachers believe that they can be recognised as professionals and the majority systematically act professionally, as advanced occupationalists, in the uncertain professional landscape.

Overwhelmingly, the research indicates that the return of a credible, mandatory professional body is a viable starting point for re-professionalising the sector now that sufficient time has passed since deregulation, and there is no dominant FE teacher discourse on professionalism. A dominant discourse needs to be established in FE teaching, which brings together the diverse nature of the role, and subsequently built upon in order to elevate status and credibility of FE teachers as working in a profession and as professionals. As it currently stands, FE teaching is an occupation in which its staff operate professionally. Through utilising a tripartite approach to professionalism and re-establishing gatekeeping this could facilitate FE teaching into being recognised as a genuine profession and establish an elevated status for FE teachers for the future.

References

Abbott, A. (2001) The Chaos of Disciplines. Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press.

Abbott, A. (1998) The System of the Professions. London: University of Chicago Press.

Adams, R. (2015) Education Bill to close 'loopholes' Blocking Academies Expansion. Available at: <https://www.theguardian.com/education/2015/jun/03/education-bill-loopholes-academies-schools> (Accessed 22nd May, 2018).

Advance HE (HEA) (2011) The UK Professional Standards Framework for teaching and supporting learning in higher education. Available at: <https://s3.eu-west-2.amazonaws.com/assets.creode.advancehe-documentmanager/documents/advance-he/UK%20Professional%20Standards%20Framework_1570613241.pdf> (Accessed 30th November, 2019).

Altheide, D. L. and Johnson, J.M. (1998) Criteria for Assessing Interpretive Validity in Qualitative Research in N. Denzin and Y. S. Lincoln (eds.) Collecting and Interpreting Qualitative Materials. London: Sage.

Apple. M. (2010) Foreword in Gewirtz, S., Mahoney, P., Hextall, I. and Cribb, A. (eds.) (2010) Changing Teacher Professionalism: International Trends, challenges and ways forward. Abingdon: Routledge.

Appleyard, K. and Appleyard, N. (2016) The Professional Teacher in Further Education. Northwich: Critical Publishing.

Association of Colleges (AoC) (2018) General Further Education Colleges available at: < https://www.aoc.co.uk/general-further-education-colleges> (Accessed 25th January, 2019).

Association of Colleges (AoC) (2016) College Key Facts 2016/17. London: Association of Colleges.

Association of Colleges (AoC) (2019) T Level Professional Development (TLPD) Offer: Understanding T Levels. Available at: <https://www.aoc.co.uk/teaching-and-learning/t-level/t-level-professional-development-tlpd-offer-understanding-t-levels> (Accessed 16th September, 2019).

Association of Employment and Learning Providers (AELP) (2018) Press Releases: AELP withdraws from the governance of the Education and Training Foundation, available at: <https://www.aelp.org.uk/news/news/

press-releases/aelp-withdraws-from-the-governance-of-the-education-and-training-foundation/> (Accessed 25th September, 2018).

Association of Teachers and Lecturers (ATL) (2015) Press Release: New teachers already demotivated about teaching at the start of their careers. (Available at: <https://www.atl.org.uk/Images/Jan%2023%20for%2027, %202015%20-%20New%20teachers%20already%20demotovated%20 about%20teaching%20at%20the%20start%20of%20their%20careers.pdf> (Accessed 13th September, 2017).

Baker, K. (1989) Further Education's New Image, Education and Training, Vol. 31 (3), p 18.

Ball, S. (2013) Foucault, Power and Education. Abingdon: Routledge.

Ball, S. (2003) The Teacher's Soul and the Terrors of Performativity, Journal of Education Policy, Vol. 18 (2), pp 215-228.

Bathmaker, A. and Avis, J. (2005) Becoming a Lecturer in Further Education in England: The Construction of Professional Identity and the Role of Communities of Practice, Journal of Education for Teaching, Vol. 31 (1), pp 47-62.

Beaty, L. (2000) Becoming a Professional Teacher in Hall, L. and Marsh, K. (2000) Professionalism, Policies and Values: A Reader. London: Greenwich University Press.

Belgutay, J. (2019) College Teacher Pay Continues to Drop. Available at: <https://www.tes.com/news/college-teacher-pay-continues-drop> (Accessed 25th August, 2019).

Benn, C. and Chitty, C. (1996) Thirty Years On: Is comprehensive education alive and well or struggling to survive? London: David Fulton Publishers.

Bennett, A. (2007) Case Study Methods: Design, use, and comparative advantages, in Nahmias-Wolinsky, Y. and Spintz, D. F. (eds.) Models, Numbers, and Cases: Methods for Studying International Relations, pp 19-55. USA: University of Michigan Press.

Berger, R. (2015) Now I See it, Now I Don't: Researcher's position and reflexivity in qualitative research, Qualitative Research, Vol. 15 (2), pp 219-234.

Bernard, N. S., Dollinger, S. J. and Ramaniah, N. V. (2002) Applying the Big Five Personality Factors to the Impostor Phenomenon, Journal of Personality Assessment, Vol. 78 (2), pp 321-333.

Black, T, (1993) Evaluating Social Science Research. London: Sage.

Blaikie, N. (2007) Approaches to Social enquiry: Advancing knowledge, 2nd edn. Cambridge: Polity.

Boffey, D. (2011) Teacher Trainers Threaten to Strike over Michael Gove's Plan to Move Training to the Classroom. Available at: <https://www.the guardian.com/education/2011/apr/17/teacher-training-strike-gove-reform> (Accessed 20th May, 2018).

Bowen, G. A. (2009) Document Analysis as a Qualitative Research Method, Qualitative Research journal, Vol. 9 (2), pp 27-40.

Box (2017) Get GDPR-Ready with Box. Redwood City CA: Box Inc.

Braun, V. and Clarke, V. (2006) Using Thematic Analysis in Psychology, Qualitative Research in Psychology, Vol. 3 (2), pp 77-101.

British Educational Research Association (BERA) (2011) Ethical Guidelines for Educational Research. London: The British Educational Research Association (BERA).

Brown, J. (1999) The Use of Focus Groups in Clinical Research in B. Crabtree and W. L. Miller (eds.) Doing Qualitative Research, 2nd edn. Thousand Oaks: Sage.

Burford, B., Morrow, G., Rothwell, C., Carter, M. and Illing, J. (2014) Professionalism Education Should Reflect Reality: Findings from three health professions, Medical Education, Vol. 48, pp 361-374.

Cambridge Dictionary (2017a) Meaning of “Further Education” in the English Dictionary. Available at: <http://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english /further-education> (Accessed 9th August, 2017).

Cambridge Dictionary (2017b) Meaning of “Professionalism” in the English Dictionary. Available at: <http://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/ professionalism>(Accessed 22nd October, 2017).

Chanter, A. (2009) Dilemmas in Postgraduate Research: A frontline view from the field in Jolly, M. and Wong, P. K. (eds.) The Proceedings of the Plymouth Postgraduate Symposium 2009, University of Plymouth UK, pp 284-298.

Chartered College of Teaching (CCT) (2019) Chartered Teaching Programme. Available at: <https://chartered.college/wp-content/uploads/2017/07/Chartered-Teacher-booklet-2019-cohort-2.pdf> (Accessed 26th July, 2019).

Chitty, C. (2009) Education Policy in Britain (2nd edition). Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

Clance, P. R. (2013) Impostor Phenomenon. Available at:<http://paulineroseclance.com/impostor_phenomenon.html> (Accessed 22nd April, 2015).

Clance, P.R., & Imes, S.A. (1978). The Impostor Phenomenon in High Achieving Women: Dynamics and therapeutic interventions. Psychotherapy: Theory Research and Practice, Vol. 15, pp 241 247.

Clonts, J. G. (1992) The Concept of Reliability as it Pertains to Data from Qualitative Studies. Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the Southwest Educational Research Association, Houston, Texas, January 30th, 1992.

Clow, R. (2001) Further Education Teachers' Constructions of Professionalism, Journal of Vocational Education & Training, Vol. 53 (3), pp 407-420.

Cohen, L., Manion, L. and Morrison, K. (2011) Research Methods in Education, 7th edn. Abingdon: Routledge.

Collins (2017) Definition of Further Education, available at: <https://www.collinsdictionary.com/dictionary/english/further-education> (Accessed 9th August, 2017).

Commons Public Accounts Committee (CPAC) (2016) Training New Teachers. Available at: <http://www.educationengland.org.uk/documents/pdfs/2016-pac-training-new-teachers.pdf> (Accessed 30th May, 2018).

Confederation of British Industry (CBI) (2010) Ready to Grow: Business priorities for education and skills. London: The Confederation of British Industry (CBI).

Coxon, A., Davies, P. and Jones, C. (1986) Images of Social Stratification: Occupational Structures and Class. London: Sage.

Crawford, W. S., Kristen, K., Shanine, M. V., Whitman, K. and Michele, K. (2016) Examining the Impostor Phenomenon and Work Family Conflict, Journal of Managerial Psychology, Vol. 31 (2), pp 375-390.

Cresswell, J. W. (1994) Research Design: Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches. Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications Inc.

Cutcliffe, J. (2003) Reconsidering Reflexivity: Introducing the case for intellectual entrepreneurship, Qualitative Health Research, Vol. 13, pp 136-148.

Davies, B. and Bansel, P. (2007) Neoliberalism and Education, International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education, Vol. 20 (3), pp 247-259.

De Tona, C. (2006) But What is Interesting is the Story of Why and How Migration Happened, Forum: Qualitative Social Research, Vol. 7 (3), Article 13.

Dearing, R. (1996) Review of Qualifications for 16-19 Year Olds. London: School Curriculum and Assessment Authority.

Denzin, N. K. and Lincoln, Y. S. (2008) Collecting and Interpreting Qualitative Materials. London: Sage Publications Ltd.

Denzin, N. K. and Lincoln, Y. S. (2000) Handbook of Qualitative Research 2nd edn. Thousand Oaks: SAGE Publications.

Department for Business, Innovation & Skills (DBIS) (2016) BIS Research Paper Number 296: Understanding the further education market in England. London: Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (DBIS).

Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (DBIS) (2012) Professionalism in Further Education: Final Report. London: The Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (DBIS).

Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (DBIS) (2010) Skills for Sustainable Growth. London: The Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (DBIS).

Department for Education (DfE) (2018) Implementation of T Level Programmes: Government consultation response. Available at: <https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/711472/Implementation_of_T_Level_programmes-Government_consultation_response.pdf> (Accessed 12th September, 2019).

Department for Education (DfE) (2016a) The Technical and Further Education Bill: Factsheet. Available at: <https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/ uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/563497/Technical_and_Further_Education_Bill_factsheet.pdf> (Accessed 18th May, 2018).

Department for Education (DfE) (2016b) White Paper: Educational Excellence Everywhere. London: Department for Education (DfE).

Department for Education (DfE) (2013a) The Further Education Teachers' Qualifications (England) (Revocation) Regulations 2013. Available at: <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2013/1976/made> (Accessed 29th June, 2017).

Department for Education (DfE) (2013b) Teachers' Standards Guidance for School Leaders, School Staff and Governing Bodies. Available at: < https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/665520/Teachers__Standards.pdf> (Accessed 30th November, 2019).

Department for Education (DfE) (2010a) The Case for Change. Available at: <https://dera.ioe.ac.uk//1907/1/DFE-00564-2010.pdf> (Accessed May 18th, 2018).

Department for Education (DfE) (2010b) White Paper: The importance of teaching Cm 7980. London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office (HMSO).

Department for Education (DfE) (2007a) The Further Education Teachers' Qualifications (England) 2007, London: The Stationery Office (TSO).

Department for Education (DfE) (2007b) The Further Education Teachers' Continuing Professional Development and Registration (England) Regulations 2007. Available at: <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2007/2116/contents/made> (Accessed 15th September, 2014).

Department for Education (DfE) (2001) The Further Education Teachers' Qualifications (England) 2001, London: The Stationery Office (TSO).

Department for Employment and Education (DfEE) (1997) White Paper Excellence in Schools Cmnd 3681. London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office (HMSO).

Du Gay, P. (2000) In Praise of Bureaucracy: Weber, organisation, Ethics. Sage: London.

Duckworth, V. and Tummons, J. (2010) Contemporary Issues in Lifelong Learning. Maidenhead: Open University Press.

Duckworth, V. and Smith, R. (2018) Breaking the triple lock: Further education and transformative teaching and learning, Education + Training, Vol. 60 (6), pp 529-543.

Education and Training Foundation (ETF) (2019a) Further Education Workforce Data for England: Analysis of the 2017-2018 staff individualised record (SIR) data. Available at: <https://www.et-foundation.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/SIR26-Workforce-Data-report.pdf> (Accessed 12th September, 2019).

Education and Training Foundation (ETF) (2019b) Teaching Qualifications for the FE & Skills Sector. Available at: <https://www.feadvice.org.uk/i-want-work-fe-skills-sector/i-want-be-teacher-fe-skills/teaching-qualifications-fe-skills-sector> (Accessed 10th September, 2019).

Education and Training Foundation (ETF) (2019c) Taking Teaching Further. Available at: <https://www.et-foundation.co.uk/supporting/support-teacher-recruitment/taking-teaching-further/> (Accessed 14th September, 2019).

Education and Training Foundation (ETF) (2019d) First Teachers in the Country Achieve Chartered Teacher Status. Available at: <https://www.et-foundation.co.uk/news/first-teachers-in-the-country-achieve-chartered-teacher-status/> (Accessed 15th September, 2019).

Education and Training Foundation (ETF) (2019e) T Levels. Available at: <https://www.et-foundation.co.uk/supporting/technical-education/t-levels/> (Accessed 13th September, 2019).

Education and Training Foundation (ETF) (2017a) Foundation Online Learning: T Levels. Available at:<https://www.foundationonline.org.uk/course/index.php?categoryid=30> (Accessed 14th September, 2019).

Education and Training Foundation (ETF) (2017b) ETF Responds to Launch of Chartered Teacher Programme from the Chartered College of Teaching. Available at:<https://www.et-foundation.co.uk/news/etf-responds-launch-chartered-teacher-programme-chartered-college-teaching/> (Accessed 12th September, 2018).

Education and Training Foundation (ETF) (2016) Advanced Teacher Status. Available at: <https://set.et-foundation.co.uk/professionalism/ats/> (Accessed 20th September, 2018).

Education and Training Foundation (ETF) (2014) Achieving Professional Potential: Professional standards for teachers and trainers in education and training. Available at:< https://www.et-foundation.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2014/05/ETF_Professional_Standards_Digital_FINAL.pdf>(Accessed 30th November, 2019).

Education and Training Foundation (ETF) (ND) Our Vision and Role. Available at:< https://www.et-foundation.co.uk/about-us/our-vision_role/> (Accessed 30th November, 2019).

Edward, S., Coffield , F., Steer, R. and Gregson, M. (2005) Coping with Endless Change: The Impact on Teaching Staff in the Learning and Skills Sector, Paper presented at the British Educational Research Association Annual Conference, 14-17 September 2005.

Elliott, G. and Hall, V. (1994) FE Inc – Business Orientation in FE and the Introduction of Human Resource Management, Vol. 14 (1), pp 3-10.

Estrella, M. T. (1999) Reflective Practice and Conscientisation, Pedagogy, Culture & Society, Vol. 7 (2), pp 235-244.

Eurobarometer (2011) Attitudes Towards Vocational Education and Training. Special Report 369. European Commission.

Flick, U. (2014) An Introduction to Qualitative Research, 5th edn. London: Sage.

Fino, J. (2019) Blow Your Own Trumpet and Shake Off Your Victim Mentality, Providers Told. Available at: <https://feweek.co.uk/2019/03/29/blow-your-own-trumpet-and-shake-off-your-victim-mentality-providers-told/> (Accessed 20thSeptember, 2019).

Fontes, L. A. (1998) Ethics in Family Violence Research: Cross cultural issues, Family Relations, Vol. 47 (1), pp 53-61.

Foucault, M. (2001) Truth and Power in J. Faubion (Ed.) and R. Hurley (Trans.) Power (pp 111-133). Harmondsworth: Penguin.

Foucault, M. (1994) Michael Foucault: Power, essential works of Foucault 1954-1984. Volume 3. London: Penguin Group.

Foucault, M. (1992) The History of Sexuality Vol. 2: The use of pleasure. Harmondsworth: Penguin.

Foucault, M. (1991) Questions of Method in G. Burchell, C. Gordon, and P. Miller (Eds.) The Foucault Effect: Studies in governmentality (pp 73-86). Hemel Hempstead: Harvester Wheatsheaf.

Foucault, M. (1980) Power/Knowledge: Selected interviews and other writings, 1972-1977. Transcribed by Colin Gordon. Brighton: Harvester Press.

Foucault, M. (1978) 'On Governmentality', Ideology & Consciousness, (6), pp 5–22.

Foucault, M. (1977). Language, Counter-memory, Practice: Selected essays and interviews in D. F. Bouchard (Ed.), D. F. Bouchard, & S. Simon (Trans.). Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press.

Freidson, E. (2004) Professionalism: The third logic. Cambridge: Polity Press.

Freidson, E. (1994a) Stress in Academic Life. Buckingham: Open University Press.

Freidson, E. (1994b) Professionalism Reborn: Theory, Prophecy and Policy: Cambridge: Polity Press.

Freidson, E. (1983) The Reorganization of the Professions by Regulation, Law and Human Behaviour, Vol. 7 (2/3), pp 279-290.

Freidson, E. (1970) Professions of a Medicine: A Study of the Sociology of Applied Knowledge. New York: Harper and Row.

Further Education National Training Organisation (FENTO) (1999) Standards for Teaching and Learning in Further Education in England and Wales. London: The Further Education National Training Organisation (FENTO).

Gallardo-Echenique, E. E. (2014) An Integrative Review of Literature on Learners in the Digital Era, Studia Paedagogica, Vol. 19 (4), pp 161-184.

Gibb, N. (2017) The Chartered Teacher Programme: Another stick to beat teachers with. Available from: <https://teachingbattleground.wordpress.com/2017/06/05/the-chartered-teacher-programme-another-stick-to-beat-teachers-with/> (Accessed 16th August, 2018).

Gillard, D. (2018) Education in England: A history, available at: <www.education england.org.uk/history> (Accessed 15th September, 2018).

Glaser, B. G. and Strauss, A. L. (1967) The Discovery of Grounded Theory: Strategies for Qualitative Research. Chicago: Aldine.

Gleeson, D. (2014) Trading Places: On Becoming an FE Professional in S. Crowley (ed.) Challenging Professional Learning. Abingdon: Routledge.

Gleeson, D., Davies, J. and Wheeler, E. (2004) On the Making and the Taking of Professionalism in the Further Education (FE) Workplace. Paper presented at The British Educational Research Association (BERA), UMIST, 2004.

Goetz, J. P. and LeCompte, M. D. (1984) Ethnography and Qualitative Design in Educational Research. Orlando: Academic Press.

Goode, W. (1960) Encroachment, Charlatanism and the Emerging Professions: Psychology, Sociology and Medicine, American Sociological Review, Vol. 25, pp 902-913.

Goode, W. (1957) Community Within a Community: The Profession, American Sociological Review, Vol. 22, pp 194-200.

Gov.uk (2013) Speech: Michael Gove Speech to Teachers and Headteachers at the National College for Teaching and Leadership. Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/ government/speeches/michael-gove-speech-to-teachers-and-headteachers-at-the-national-college-for-teaching-and-leadership> (Accessed 18th June, 2018).

Grace, G. (1990) Teachers and the State in Britain: A changing relationship in Lawn, M. and Grace, G. (1990) Teachers: The Culture of Politics of Work. Barcombe: The Falmer Press.

Gray, D. (2009) Doing Research in the Real World. London: Sage Publications Limited.

Greenwood, E. (1957) Attributes of a Profession, Social Work, Vol. 2 (3), pp 45-55.

Groves, B. (2015) Where the IfL Went Wrong, and Why the ETF has Already Failed with its Legacy. Available at: <https://www.tes.com/news/where-ifl-went-wrong-and-why-etf-has-already-failed-its-legacy> (Accessed 15th September, 2019).

Guba, E. and Lincoln, Y. (1994) Competing Paradigms in Qualitative Research in N. K. Denzin and Y. S. Lincoln (eds.) Handbook of Qualitative Research. Thousand Oaks: Sage.

Hall, S. (1996) Who Needs Identity? In Du Gay, P., Evans, J. and Redman, P. (2000) Identity: A reader. London: Sage.

Hall, L. and Marsh, K. (2000) Professionalism, Policies and Values: A Reader. London: Greenwich University Press.

Hammond, M. (2004) An Analysis of the Effects of the FENTO Standards on the Teaching Profession: A tribute to Carole Flynn. Available at:<http://www.leeds.ac.uk/educol/documents/00003753.htm> (Accessed 12th September, 2018).

Hancké, B. (2009) Intelligent Research Design. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Handy, C. (1993) Understanding Organizations: How understanding the ways organizations actually work can be used to manage them better. New York: Oxford University Press.

Hansard (1960) House of Commons Debates, Vol. 620, cols. 51-2, 21 March.

Harding, S. (1995) 'Strong objectivity': A response to the new objectivity question, Synthese, Vol. 104, pp 331-349.

Hargreaves, L., Cunningham, M., Hansen, A., McIntyre, D., and Oliver, C. (2007) The Status of Teachers and the Teaching Profession in England: Views from Inside and Outside the Profession - Final report. Nottingham: The Department for Education and Skills (DfES) Publications.

Harland, J. (1987) The TVEI Experience: Issues of Control, Response and the Professional Role of Teachers in D. Gleeson (ed.) TVEI and Secondary Education: A Critical Appraisal. Milton Keynes: Open University Press.

Harrington, A. (2005) Introduction: What is social theory? In Modern Social Theory: An introduction, A. Harrington, (ed.), pp 1-5. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) (2019) HE Student Data: Who's studying in HE? Available at: <https://www.hesa.ac.uk/data-and-analysis/students/whos-in-he> (Accessed 15th September, 2019).

Hochschild, A. R. (2003) The Managed Heart: Commercialization of human feeling. London: University of California Press.

Hodges, B. D., Ginsburg, S., Cruess, R., Cruess, S., Delport, R., Hafferty, F., Ho, M. J., Holmboe, E., Holtman, M., Ohbu, S., Rees, C., Ten Cate, O., Tsugawa, Y., Va Mook, W., Wass, V., Wilkinson, T. and Wade, W. (2010) Assessment of Professionalism: Recommendations from the Ottawa 2010 Conference, Medical Teacher (2011), Vol 33, pp 354-363.

Hodgson, A. and Spours, K. (2013) Why IfL Should Promote Triple Professionalism, InTuition, Vol 13, pp 16-18.

Hope, A. (2013) Foucault, Panopticism and School Surveillance Research in Murphy, M. (ed.) (2013) Social Theory and Education Research. Abingdon: Routledge.

Hoyle, E. (2001) Teaching: Prestige, Status and Esteem, Educational Management and Administration, Vol. 29 (2), pp 139-152.

Hoyle, E. (1995) Changing Concepts of a Profession in H. Busher and R. Saran (eds.) The Management of Professionals in Schools. London: Longman.

Hoyle, E. (1974) Professionality, Professionalism and Control in Teaching, London Educational Review, Vol. 3 (2), pp 13-19.

Hoyle, E. (1972) The Role of the Teacher. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul.

Hughes, C. (2004) Authority and Agency in General Further Education, Foster Review: Images and Reputations Theme. London: The Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (DBIS).

Husbands, C. (2012) The Government was Right: As the 2010 White Paper said, the best systems 'train their teachers rigorously'. (Available at: <https://ioelondonblog.wordpress.com/2012/07/31/the-government-was-right-as-the-2010-white-paper-said-the-best-systems-train-their-teachers-rigorously/> (Accessed 16th July, 2017).

Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) (2018) Guide to the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) available at: <https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/711097/guide-to-the-general-data-protection-regulation-gdpr-1-0.pdf> (Accessed 15th September, 2018).

Institute for Learning (IfL) (2014) Professionalism in Further Education. Available at: < https://set.et-foundation.co.uk/media/1263118/Professionalism-in-further-education.pdf> (Accessed 16th June, 2017).

Institute for Learning (IfL) (2013) Should Teaching Qualifications be Left to Chance? Available at: <https://set.etfoundation.co.uk/media/93333/2013_08_16_Teaching_Qualifications.pdf> (Accessed 27th January, 2017).

Institute for Learning (IfL) (2012) InTuition: Issue 9 Summer 2012. Available at: <https://set.et-foundation.co.uk/media/114829/InTuition-issue-9-Summer-2012.pdf> (Accessed 27th May, 2017).

Jacob, A. and Furgerson, S. (2012) Writing Interview Protocols and Conducting Interviews: Tips for students new to the field of qualitative research, The Qualitative Report 2012, Vol. 17, pp 1-10.

Jakobovits, L. A., and Lambert, W. E. (1962). Semantic Satiation in an Addition Task, Canadian Journal of Psychology, Vol. 16, pp 112-19.

James, E. (1972) Teacher Education and Training Report by a Committee of Inquiry appointed by the Secretary of State for Education and Science. London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office (HMSO).

James, D., Ashcroft, K. and Orr-Ewing, M. (1999) The Professional Teacher in K. Ashcroft and D. James (Eds.) (1999) The Creative Professional: Learning to Teach 14-19-Year-Olds. London: Falmer Press.

Jephcote, M. and Latiner Raby, R. (2012) A Comparative View of Colleges of Further Education (UK) and Community Colleges (US): Maintaining access in an era of financial constraint, Research in Post-Compulsory Education, Vol. 17 (3), pp 349-366.

Johnson, T. (1972) Professions and Power. London: Macmillan.

Jones, K. (2003) Education in Britain: 1944 to the present. Cambridge: Polity Press.

Juneja, P. (2019) New Public Management Model. Available at: <https:// www.managementstudyguide.com/new-public-management.htm> (Accessed 19th October, 2019).

Kacen, L. and Chaitin, J. (2006) The Times are a Changing: Understanding qualitative research in ambiguous, conflictual and changing contexts, Qualitative Report, Vol. 11, pp 209-228.

Kanungo, R. and Lambert, W. E. (1963) Semantic Satiation and Meaningfulness, The American Journal of Psychology, Vol. 76 (3), pp 421-428.

Kapuchu, N. (2006) New Public Management: Theory, ideology, and practice in Farazmand, A. and Pinkowski, J. (eds.) (2006) Handbook of Globalization, Governance, and Public Administration. New York: Routledge.

Kennedy, H. (1992) Learning Works: Widening participation in Further Education. Coventry: The Further Education Funding Council (FEFC).

Kimball, B. A. (1992) The True Professional Ideal in America. Oxford: Basil Blackwell.

Kogan, M. (1978) The Politics of Educational Change. London: Fontana/ Collins.

Lawton, D. (2005) Education and Labour Party Ideologies 1900-2001 and Beyond. Abingdon: Routledge Falmer.

Layder, D. (1996) Understanding Social Theory. London: Sage Publications Ltd.

Lee, J. (2012) FE Professionalism Gets Radical Shake-up. Available at: <https://www.tes.com/news/fe-professionalism-gets-radical-shake> (Accessed 25th May, 2016).

Lieberman, M. (1956) Education as a Profession. New Jersey: Prentice Hall.

Lietz, C. A., Langer, C. L. And Furman, R. (2006) Establishing Trustworthiness in Qualitative Research in Social Work: Implications from a study regarding spirituality, Qualitative Social Work, Vol 5, pp 441-458.

Lifelong Learning UK (LLUK) (2006) New Overarching Professional Standards for Teachers, Tutors and Trainers in the Lifelong Learning Sector. London: Lifelong Learning UK (LLUK).

Little, J. and McLaughlin, M. (eds.) (1993) Teachers' Work: Individuals, Colleagues and Contexts. New York: Teachers College Press.

Lovat, T. (2013) Jürgen Habermas: Education's reluctant hero in Murphy, M. (ed.) (2013) Social Theory and Education Research. Abingdon: Routledge.

Lucas, N. (2013) One Step Forward, Two Steps Back? The professionalisation of further education teachers in England, Research in Post Compulsory Education, Vol. 18 (4), pp 389-401.

Lucas, N. (2004a) Teaching in Further Education: New perspectives for a changing context. London: Institute of Education, University of London.

Lucas, N (2004b): The FENTO Fandango: National standards, compulsory teaching qualifications and the growing regulation of FE college teachers, Journal of Further and Higher Education, Vol. 28 (1), pp 35-51.

Lucas, N. (2002) The Introduction of National Standards and Compulsory Teacher Education for Further Education College Teachers in England: Issues and challenges, Teacher Development, Vol. 6 (3), pp 459-473.

Macdonald, K. M. (1995) The Sociology of the Professions. Sage Publications Limited: London.

Mathiesen, T. (1997) The Viewer Society, Theoretical Criminology, Vol. 1 (2), pp 215-234.

Mauther, N. and Doucet, A. (2003) Reflexive Accounts and Accounts of Reflexivity in Qualitative Data Analysis, Sociology, Vol. 37 (3), pp 413-431.

May, T. (2002) Qualitative Research in Action. London: Sage.

McCullough, G. (1995) Educational Reconstruction: From the 1944 Education Act to the 21st Century. Inaugural Lecture , University of Sheffield, 1st February.

McCullough, G., Helsby, G. and Knight, P. (2000) The Politics of Professionalism: Teachers and the Curriculum. London: Continuum.

McWilliam, E. and Tann, J. (2010) When Qualitative Meets Quantitative: Conversations about the nature of knowledge in P. Thompson and M. Walker (eds.)

Millerson, G. (1964) The Qualifying Associations; a Study in Professionalization. London: Routledge.

Morris, E. (2001) Professionalism and Trust: The Future of Teachers and Teaching. London: The Department for Education and Skills (DfES)/Social Market Foundation.

Mendanth (2016) Governmentality, available at: <https://medanth.wikispaces.com/Governmentality> (Accessed 25th February, 2016).

Merriam, S. B. (1988) Case Study Research in Education: A qualitative approach. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Mishler, E. (1991) Research Interviewing: Context and narrative (2nd edn.) Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

Morse, J. M. (1998) Designing Funded Qualitative Research in N. Denzin and Y. S. Lincoln (eds.) Strategies of Qualitative Research. London: Sage, pp 56-85.

Mortimore, P. (2009) Missed Opportunities and Mad Ideas: The government's legacy, The Guardian, 7 July. Available at: <https://www. theguardian.com/education /2009/jul/07/peter-mortimore-education-schools> (Accessed August 18th, 2018).

Moser, C. (1999) A Fresh Start: Improving literacy and numeracy. London: Department for Employment and Education (DfEE).

Mulholland, H. (2012) Michael Gove Tells Academies They Can Hire Unqualified Teaching Staff. Available at:<https://www.theguardian.com/ education/2012/jul/27/gove-academies-unqualified-teaching-staff> (Accessed August 18th, 2018).

Murphy, M. (ed.) (2013) Social Theory and Education Research. Abingdon: Routledge.

Murphy, M. and Skillen, P. (2013) The Politics of School Research in Murphy, M. (ed.) (2013) Social Theory and Education Research. Abingdon: Routledge.

National Education Union (NEU) (2018) NEU Survey Shows Workload Causing 80% of Teachers to Consider Leaving the Profession. Available at: <https://neu.org.uk/press-releases/neu-survey-shows-workload-causing-80-teachers-consider-leaving-profession#> (Accessed 18th September, 2019).

Niesche, R. (2016) Review Essay: What use is Foucault in education today?, Journal of Educational Administration and History, Vol. 48 (1), pp 113-118.

Norton, S. (2012) Potential realised or Same Old Cinderella?: Future options for England's further education sector, SKOPE Research Paper No. 109 June 2012. Cardiff: The Centre on Skills, Knowledge and Organisational Performance (SKOPE).

O'Leary, M. (2015) Resilience, Resistance and Reclaiming Professionalism. Available at: <https://www.fenews.co.uk/featured-article/11545-resilience-resistance-and-reclaiming-professionalism> (Accessed 27th April, 2020).

O'Leary, M. (2013) Expansive and Restrictive Approaches to Professionalism in FE Colleges: The observation of teaching and learning as a case in point. Research in Post-Compulsory Education, Vol. 18 (4), pp 348-364.

O'Leary, Z. (2007) The Essential Guide to Doing Research. London: SAGE Publications Ltd.

Oliver, P. (2010) Foucault: The key ideas. London: Hodder Education.

Oppenheim, A. (1992) Questionnaire Design, Interviewing and Attitude Measurements (2nd edn.) London: Pinter.

Orr, K. (2009) Autonomy and Powerlessness: The gap between policy and practice in English further education colleges. Paper presented at Discourse, Power and Resistance Conference, Manchester Metropolitan University, 6th-8th May 2009. Available at: < http://eprints.hud.ac.uk/id/eprint/8503/1/Microsoft_Word_-_DPRCPDPaper.pdf> (Accessed 20th June, 2018).

Ovds, A. (2010) The Marketisation of the School System in England. Available at: <http://www.skolo.org/en/2010/08/13/the-marketisation-of-the-school-system-in-england/> (Accessed August 18th, 2018).

Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary (2017) Definition of Professionalism. Available at: <https://www.oxfordlearnersdictionaries.com/definition/english/professionalism?q=professionalism>(Accessed 22nd October, 2017).

Padgett, D. K. (2008) Qualitative Methods in Social Work Research. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Parkin, F. (1979) Marxism and Class Theory: A Bourgeois Critique. London: Tavistock Publications.

Patton, M. Q. (2015) Qualitative Research and Evaluation Methods. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Plowright, D. and Barr, G. (2012) An Integrated Professionalism in Further Education: A time for phronesis? Journal of Further and Higher Education, Vol. 36 (1), pp 1-16.

Postlethwaite, K. (1999) Creative Teaching and Reflective Practice in K. Ashcroft and D. James (Eds.) (1999) The Creative Professional: Learning to Teach 14-19-Year-Olds. London: Falmer Press.

Rabinow, P. (ed.) (1991) The Foucault Reader: An introduction to Foucault's thought. London: Penguin.

Randle, K. and Brady, N. (2005) Managerialism and Professionalism in the 'Cinderella Service' in Hall, L. and Marsh, K. (2000) Professionalism, Policies and Values: A Reader. London: Greenwich University Press.

Randle, K. and Brady, N. (1997) Managerialism and Professionalism in the 'Cinderella Service', Journal of Vocational Education and Training, Vol 49, pp 121-139.

Ranson, S. (1984) Towards a Tertiary Tripartism: New codes of social control and the 17+ in P. Broadfoot (ed) Selection Certification and Control. London: The Falmer Press.

Robinson, N. (1999) The Use of Focus Group Methodology - with selected samples from sexual health research, Journal of Advanced Nursing, Vol. 29, pp 905-913.

Robson, C. (2011) Real World Research, 3rd edn. Chichester: John Wiley and Sons Ltd.

Robson, J. (2006) Teacher Professionalism in Further and Higher Education: Challenges to culture and practice. Abingdon: Routledge.

Rogers, C., Lyon, H. and Tausch, R. (2014) Effective Teacher: Person-centred Teaching, Psychology, Philosophy and Dialogues with Carl, R. Rogers and Harold, Lyon. London: Routledge.

Said, E. (1994) Representatives of the Intellectual. New York: Vintage Books.

Saldana, J. (2016) The Coding Manual for Qualitative Researchers. London: SAGE Publications Ltd.

Sallis, E. (2013) Would you Abolish the Regulations to Have Qualified Doctors, Airline Pilots, chartered Accountants or Nurses? in Institute for Learning (2013) Should Teaching Qualifications be Left to Chance? London: Institute for Learning (IfL).

Sennet, R. (1998) The Corrosion of Character: The Personal Consequences of Work in the New Capitalism. London: W. W. Norton & Company Ltd.

Sexton, S. (1977) Evolution by Choice in C. B. Cox and R. Boyson, Black Paper 1977. London: Temple Smith.

Shah, M. (2014) On The Frontline: Further Education – For Other People's Children? Available at: <http://discoversociety.org/2014/02/15/on-the-

frontline-further-education-for-other-peoples-children/> (Accessed 11th August, 2017).

Shaw, I. (1996) Evaluating in Practice. Bodmin: Arena.

Shedman (2017) Would you Become a Chartered Teacher? Available at: <https://community.tes.com/threads/would-you-become-a-chartered-teacher.764803/> (Accessed 16th September, 2019).

Sherman, R. (2013) Impostor Syndrome: When you feel like you're faking it, American Nurse Today, Vol 8. (5), pp 57-58.

Shortland, S. (2004) Peer Observation: a tool for staff development or compliance? Journal of Further and Higher Education, Vol. 28 (2), 219-228.

Simon, B. (1991) Education and the Social Order 1940-1990. London: Lawrence and Wishart.

Smith, N. (2000) Afterword: Who Rules this Sausage Factory? Antipode, Vol. 32 (3), pp 330-339.

Swann, M., McIntyre, D., Pell, T., Hargreaves, L. and Cunningham, M. (2010) Teachers' Conceptions of Teacher Professionalism in England in 2003 and 2006, British Educational Research Journal (BERA), Vol. 36 (4), pp 549-571.

Tashakkori, A. and Teddlie, C. (1998) Mixed Methodology: Combining qualitative and quantitative approaches. Thousand Oaks: Sage.

Teaching Regulation Agency (TRA) (2018) Teacher Misconduct: Disciplinary procedures for the teaching profession. Available at: <https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/776859/Disciplinary_procedures_for_the_teaching__profession.pdf> (Accessed 30th November, 2019).

Teaching Regulation Agency (TRA) (ND) About Us. Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/teaching-regulation-agency/about> (Accessed 30th November, 2019).

The Policy Consortium (2014) Taking the Pulse of Further Education: The Great FE and Skills Survey of 2014. London: The Policy Consortium.

The University of Lincoln (2014) The University of Lincoln's Ethical Principles for Research with Humans. Lincoln: Lincoln University.

Thomson, P. (2013) Problem, Problematisation – What's the Difference?, available at: <https://patthomson.net/2013/01/28/problem-problematisation-whats-the-difference/> (Accessed 15th September, 2018).

Thompson, R. (2014) Initial Teacher Education for the Education and Training Sector in England: Development and change in generic and subject-specialist provision. Available at:<https://www.gatsby.org.uk/uploads/education/reports/pdf/initial-teacher-education-for-the-education-and-training-sector.pdf> (Accessed 28th August, 2017).

Trades Union Congress (TUC) (2009) Skills for Growth: The National Skills Strategy. Available at: <https://www.tuc.org.uk/research-analysis/reports/skills-growth-national-skills-strategy> (Accessed 17th May, 2018).

Tummons, J. (2009) Curriculum Studies in the Lifelong Learning Sector. Exeter: Learning Matters.

University and College Union (UCU) (2009) UCU Congress 2009. Available at: <https://www.ucu.org.uk/article/3890/Further-education-sector-conference> (Accessed 27th July, 2018).

Van De Camp, K., Vernooij-Dassen, M. J., Grol, R. P. and Bottema, B. J. (2004) How to Conceptualize Professionalism: A qualitative study, Medical Teacher, Vol. 26 (8), pp 696-702.

Wallace, S. (ed.) (2019) A Dictionary of Education (2nd edn.). Available at: <https://www.oxfordreference.com/view/10.1093/acref/9780199679393.001.0001/acref-9780199679393-e-754?rskey=ExtfhW&result=732> (Accessed 19th October, 2019).

Wallace, S. (2013) Understanding the Further Education Sector: A critical guide to policies and practices. Northwich: Critical Publishing.

Whitty, G. (2000) Teacher Professionalism in New Times, Journal of Inservice Education, Vol. 26 (2), pp 281-295.

Wolf, A. (2011) Review of Vocational Education: The Wolf Report. London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office (HMSO).

Yin, R. K. (2009) Case Study Research: Design and methods. Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications.

Zuckerberg, B. (2008) Overcoming Analysis Paralysis, Frontiers in Ecology Environment, Vol. 6, pp 505-506.

Appendices

Appendix I Policy timeline and contextual underpinning

2019 - Present Johnson Conservative	No major changes to education upon submission of the thesis		
2016 - 2019 May Conservative	**2019**	Ofsted Revised Common Inspection Framework	Move to quality in education provision rather than being data focussed
	2019	DfE Regulation of further education colleges	Review and strengthen government intervention in FE
	2017	Technical and Further Education Act	Reform of technical education, power given to The Institute of Apprenticeships in influencing the FE curriculum, requirement to share data between agencies, requirement of schools to promote technical education
	2016	Post-16 Skills Plan	
2015 - 2016 Cameron Conservative	**2016**	CPAC Training New Teachers	Criticism of the government in not attracting teachers to the profession and severe attrition rates of NQTs
	2016	DfE White Paper: Educational Excellence Everywhere	Focus on greatness in education led by the staff that work within it, more support to prevent underperformance, promoted trust of teaching staff and managers
	2015	Education and Adoption Bill	Commitment to reduce bureaucracy, handover of autonomy back to schools
2010 - 2015 Cameron/Clegg Coalition (Conservative and Liberal Democrat)	**2014**	City & Guilds Sense and Instability	Report on how government policies had impacted on the skills landscape over the last thirty years
	2014	The Policy Consortium The Great FE & Skills Survey of 2014	Reviewing concerns of staff working in FE
	2012	DBIS The Lingfield Report: Professionalism in FE	Earned autonomy, deregulation, self-regulating for CPD

2010 - 2015 Cameron/Clegg Coalition (Conservative and Liberal Democrat)	**2012**	DBIS Consultation on Revocation of the Further Education Workforce Regulations	Bid to remove professional formation, IfL, ITT requirements
	2011	Education Act	Abolishment of quangos, greater teacher power over student behaviour, government intervention for underperforming schools
	2011	NIACE A Dynamic Nucleus: Colleges at the heart of local communities	Top down approach does not work in FE
	2011	Patrignani and Conlon The Long Term Effect of Vocational Qualifications on Labour Market Outcomes	Determine the economic value of vocational education to the labour market – contributes less at lower levels, best at Level 3
	2011	Eurobarometer Attitudes towards vocational education and training	Assessing the image of vocational education – poor image in the UK compared to other countries perception
	2011	DBIS New Challenges, New Chances	Pursuing excellence through professionalism, reduction of bureaucracy and central control
	2011	DfE Training Our Next Generation of Outstanding Teachers	More rigorous selection of trainees, schools to lead ITT provision, better value for money for ITT
	2011	Wolf The Wolf Report: A Review of Vocational Education	Cuts to vocational education which were not of economic benefit, make schools more accountable for underperformance, criticism of the sector and what it offered to young people, QTLS valid for teaching in academies
	2010	White Paper: The Importance of Teaching	Higher standards in teaching and greater autonomy for teaching staff
	2010	CBI Ready to Grow: Business priorities for education and skills	Set educational priorities for the new government which reflected the needs of employers

2010 - 2015 Cameron/Clegg Coalition (Conservative and Liberal Democrat)	**2010**	Bonfire of the QUANGOs	GTC, BECTA, QCDA removed and CWDC, TDA reviewed
	2010	DBIS Skills for Sustainable Growth	Pursuing excellence through professionalism, simplified funding system, focus on increasing apprenticeships, abolishment of EMA
	2010	DFE Case for Change	Comparison to Finland in achievements with the UK falling considerably behind in GCSE results, recognition that deprivation is linked to life chances and success, widening participation focus, good teaching is linked to student engagement
2007-10 Brown Labour	**2009**	Apprenticeships, Skills, Children and Learning Act	Apprenticeship framework created, YPLA formed and became a funding agency, LSC abolished, Ofqual formed, QCDA formed, powers to tackle behaviour increased
	2009	DCSF Your Child, Your Schools, Our Future: Building a 21st Century Schools System	Education heavily linked to the principles of Every Child Matters, abandoned the National Literacy and Numeracy strategy
	2008	Education and Skills Act	School leavers to remain in education or training until aged 18 unless in employment
	2007	DFES FE Teachers Qualifications (England) Regulations 2007. FE Teachers Continuing Professional Development and Registration Regulations 2007	Formalised requirement for professional formation, QTLS, IfL membership and 30 hours CPD per year
	2007	LLUK Guidance for Awarding Institutions on Teacher Roles and Initial Teaching Qualifications	

2007-10 Brown Labour	**2007**	Hargreaves et al. The Status of Teachers and the Profession – 2002-2006	Gain views on the profession – public and media perceive teachers positively but teachers think they have a negative image particularly from the media
	2007	Green Paper Raising expectations: Staying in education and training post-16	Proposal all teenagers remain in education and training until the age of 18 unless they were employed, focus on lowering the amount of NEETs
	2007	DCSF The Children's Plan	Focus upon nurturing rather than performance
1997- 07 Blair Labour (re-elected 2001)	**2006**	MORI Opinions of Professions	Trust perceived as important by the public
	2006	DfES 2020 Vision: Report of the Teaching and Learning in 2020 Review Group	Recommended personalised learning, focus on assessment, promotion of student voice, more involvement from parents
	2006	Education and Inspections Act	Core curriculum introduced, increased powers for staff regarding behaviour, size of Ofsted increased
	2006	LLUK New Overarching Professional Standards for Teaching, Tutors and Trainers in the Lifelong Learning Sector	New standards, QTLS requirement
	2005	New Ofsted inspection regime introduced	Shorter inspections, less notice given, took over inspection in FE from the ALI
	2005	Steer Report Learning Behaviour	Report on the behaviour in schools and how to address issues with behaviour, published six core beliefs about behaviour in schools
	2005	Education Act	Teacher Training Agency (TTA) renamed Training and Development Agency for Schools (TDA)

1997- 07 Blair Labour (re-elected 2001)	**2005**	White Paper: 14-19 Education and Skills	Competency in schoolchildren in the 3rs, harder English and maths GCSEs, suggestion of a split again between academic and vocational,
	2005	DfES White Paper: Higher Standards, Better Schools for All	Academies promoted and independent state schools, penalties for underperformance, parent power in conjunction with Ofsted, schools to control own admissions
	2005	DFES Further Education: Raising Skills, Improving Life Chances	Introduced the new 2007 regulations
	2005	Santiago Teachers Matter: Attracting, Developing and Retaining Effective Teachers (OECD)	Improved status for teachers
	2004	DFES Equipping Our Teachers for the Future	
	2004	Children Act	Children's Commissioner suggested, creation of Local Safeguarding Boards,
	2004	Hughes (DBIS) Foster Review: Authority and Agency in Further Education	Undervalued FE sector
	2004	Tomlinson Report 14-19 Curriculum and Qualifications Reform	Raise the status of FE, participation and offer
	2004	DFES Every Child Matters	Introduction of five key areas for student safety, health, inclusion, economic wellbeing and contribution to society
	2003	DfES 21st Century Skills: Realising our potential	Relaunched the national Skills Strategy, employment and employer focus, review of the qualifications framework

1997- 07 Blair Labour (re-elected 2001)	**2003**	Green Paper 14-19: Opportunity and excellence	Compulsory subjects in school to remain, more emphasis on employment skills, numeracy, literacy and ICT to be free for students up to Level 2 and the age of 19, recommended that 'vocational' and 'academic' be dropped from the language used when categorising subjects
	2002	DFES Success for All: Reforming further education and training	Framework for best practice, targets for teachers to become qualified
	2002	Green Paper 14-19: Extending opportunities, raising standards	National Curriculum reviewed at Key Stage 4, new modern apprenticeships were introduced
	2002	Education Act	Introduction of schools becoming academies, National Literacy Strategy reviewed
	2002	European Commission The Copenhagen Declaration	EU countries to unite in a common objective for vocational education
	2002	GTC/MORI Teachers on Teaching: A Survey of the Teaching Profession	Status and image identified as needing improvement
	2001	The Further Education Teachers' Qualifications (England) Regulations	Statutory teacher education was introduced (3 stages), mandatory professional formation (QTLS), mandatory professional membership
	2001	Teachers were placed in category 1 for the census – reserved for the highest professions	
	2001	UNESCO Revised Recommendation Concerning Technical and Vocations Education	Provide universal recommendations to improve vocational education globally
	2001	Morris Professionalism and Trust	New professionalism and earned autonomy

1997- 07 Blair Labour (re-elected 2001)	**2001**	Colleges became known as the Learning and Skills Sector	A teaching qualification to teach in FE was required
	2000	Learning and Skills Act	LSC replaced FEFC/TEC – one funding regime, ALI formed with task of inspection and devising a common inspection framework (CIF),
	2000	Smith et al. The Scale of Occupational Stress: Report for HSE	Teachers are the most highly stressed, then nurses, then managers
	1999	FENTO National Training Standards	Qualified status for teachers, standards to work towards and abide by consisting of three key areas
	1999	Review of the National Curriculum - Curriculum 2000	
	1999	The Moser Report Improving Literacy and Numeracy: A fresh start	Review of adult numeracy and literacy with recommendations of how to improve it Core Curriculum established Achievement targets set and framework for achievement for funding awards Criticism of how FE was inspected Criticism of lack of qualifications of FE teachers
	1999	DFEE White Paper: Learning to Succeed – a New Framework for Post 16 Learning	A curriculum designed for employment, adoption of use of learning technologies within the curriculum, FEFC/TEC replaced by LSC as the funders
	1998	Teaching and Higher Education Act	GTC established, tuition fees introduced for undergraduates, HMI to inspect ITT provision
	1998	FENTO Created as a body for FE	Established national teaching standards

1997- 07 Blair Labour (re-elected 2001)	**1998**	DFEE Teachers: Meeting the Challenge of Change	New professionalism, national tests for trainee teachers in numeracy, literacy and ICT, review of requirements for QTS
	1998	DFEE The Learning Age – A Renaissance for a New Britain	Greater investment in literacy and numeracy funding, raft of specialist bodies introduced to bridge the gap between providers, funders and local authorities
	1997	The Kennedy Report Learning Works: Widening participation in further education	Expanding the opportunity to learn for all
	1997	DFEE Qualifying for Success: A Consultation Paper on the Future of Post 16 Qualifications	Simplifying FE curriculum
	1997	DFEE White Paper: Excellence in Schools	Raise status, new and higher standards, performance targets set, regulation through QTLS, GTC suggested
	1997	Education Act	Commitment to reduce educational divide
1990 - 97 Major Conservative	**1997**	Education Act (Part 1)	Introduced reasonable force for staff concerning student behaviour, performance targets set for students
	1996	Dearing Review of Qualifications for 16-19 years olds	Simplified and cohesive framework for FE, money saving focus for the sector overall, National Records of Achievement (NRAs) introduced
	1996	Learning to Compete: Education and Training for 14-19 year olds	Review of NVQs and keys skills offer Structure offer in line with labour market needs Target setting for GCSE/NVQs, English and Maths qualifications
	1996	Education Act	
	1996	Schools Inspections Act	

1990 - 97 Major Conservative	**1994**	Education Act	Review of compulsory education teacher training and appointment of a new overseeing body (TTA)
	1994	Dearing Strategic Planning in FE: The Impact of Incorporation	Public service ethic in FE – learner first
	1993	Education Act	Funding changes, SEN provision, accountability for failure
	1993	Dearing Review The National Curriculum and its Assessment: Final Report	Autonomy given back to teachers regarding the curriculum
	1992	Education (Schools) Act	Ofsted introduced as the new inspectorate
	1992	DFE The Further and Higher Education Act	LEA control removal, financial freedom for FE and support for commercialism, FEFC announced as FE's funding council
	1992	Kennedy (FEFC) Learning Works: Widening Participation in Further Education	
	1991	DFES/DFE White Paper: Education and Training in the 21st Century	FE important for supplying employer demand Remove LEA control End the divide between academic and vocational qualifications
1979 - 90 Thatcher Conservative	**1989**	Baker Further Education's New Image	Suggested education until 19, targets and central unit for FE to improve the image of FE
	1988	DFEE Teachers: Meeting the Challenge of Change	Teacher CE registration, professional regulation

1979 - 90 Thatcher Conservative	**1988**	Education Reform Act	Suggestion of freedom from LEAs Market principles introduced with FE responsible for holding their own budgets
	1987	Teachers' Pay and Conditions Act	Abolished national pay negotiations for school teachers
	1986	Deville Review of Vocational Qualifications	NVQs to bridge gap between vocational and academic qualifications
	1986	Education Act	FE provider grants Diminished powers of the LEAs and gave power to governing bodies
	1983	Teaching Quality	Changes to compulsory education teacher training
	1981	A New Training Initiative: A Programme for Action	Recommended vocational training and implemented the Youth Training Scheme (YTS)
	1981	Education Act	New legislation for special education
	1980	Education Act	Parent powers increased
	1979	Education Act	End of comprehensivisation as government policy
1976 - 79 Callaghan Labour	**1977**	Green paper Education in Schools: A consultative document	Legitimised the recommendations of the Ruskin College Speech and put forward proposals for educational change
1976 - 79 Callaghan Labour	**1976**	Ruskin College Speech The Great Debate	Critiquing current educational standards and teacher accountability. Calls for literacy and numeracy to be a priority in addition to technical, practical and vocational education
1974 - 76 Wilson Labour	**1975**	Education Act	

1970 - 74 Heath Conservative	**1975**	Bullock Report A Language for Life	Reviewed the teaching of English in schools and provided recommendations to improve current standards
1970 - 74 Heath Conservative	**1973**	Education Act	
1970 - 74 Heath Conservative	**1973**	Education: A Framework for Expansion	Plans for growth for every educational sector More school teachers, changes to teacher training
1970 - 74 Heath Conservative	**1972**	The James Report	Review of teacher training which included FE
1964 - 70 Wilson Labour	**1969**	Children and Young Persons Act	
1964 - 70 Wilson Labour	**1968**	Education Act	
	1967	Education Act	
	1966	UNESCO Report on the Special Intergovernmental Conference on the Status of Teachers	Improve status for teachers
1963 - 64 Douglas-Home Conservative	**1964**	Education Act	

1957 - 63 MacMillan Conservative	**1960**	Eccles Secret garden of the curriculum speech	
1955 - 57 Eden Conservative			
1951 - 55 Churchill Conservative			
1945 - 51 Attlee Labour			
1940 - 45 Churchill Coalition/National	**1944**	Education Act	

Appendix II The Education and Training Foundation Professional Standards for Teachers and Trainers in Education and Training (ETF, 2014: 5)

Professional Standards

PROFESSIONAL VALUES & ATTRIBUTES

Develop your own judgment of what works and does not work in your teaching and training.

1. Reflect on what works best in your teaching and learning to meet the diverse needs of learners.
2. Evaluate and challenge your practice, values and beliefs.
3. Inspire, motivate and raise aspirations of learners through your enthusiasm and knowledge.
4. Be creative and innovative in selecting and adapting strategies to help learners to learn.
5. Value and promote social and cultural diversity, equality of opportunity and inclusion.
6. Build positive and collaborative relationships with colleagues and learners.

PROFESSIONAL KNOWLEDGE & UNDERSTANDING

Develop deep and critically informed knowledge and understanding in theory and practice.

7. Maintain and update knowledge of your subject and/or vocational area.
8. Maintain and update your knowledge of educational research to develop evidence-based practice.
9. Apply theoretical understanding of effective practice in teaching, learning and assessment drawing on research and other evidence.
10. Evaluate your practice with others and assess its impact on learning.
11. Manage and promote positive learner behaviour.
12. Understand the teaching and professional role and your responsibilities.

PROFESSIONAL SKILLS

Develop your expertise and skills to ensure the best outcomes for learners.

13. Motivate and inspire learners to promote achievement and develop their skills to enable progression.
14. Plan and deliver effective learning programmes for diverse groups or individuals in a safe and inclusive environment.
15. Promote the benefits of technology and support learners in its use.
16. Address the mathematics and English needs of learners and work creatively to overcome individual barriers to learning.
17. Enable learners to share responsibility for their own learning and assessment, setting goals that stretch and challenge.
18. Apply appropriate and fair methods of assessment and provide constructive and timely feedback to support progression and achievement.
19. Maintain and update your teaching and training expertise and vocational skills through collaboration with employers.
20. Contribute to organisational development and quality improvement through collaboration with others.

Appendix III Sampling strategy

Pseudonym	Role	Organisation A – Case study B – Other provider	Status NQT/ QT	PT ITT Student	Questionnaire (29)	Focus Group 1 (12)	Focus Group 2 (10)	Interview (5)
FE Teacher 1	FE Teacher	A	QT	NA	✔	-	-	-
FE Teacher 2	FE Teacher	A	QT	NA	✔	-	-	-
FE Teacher 3	FE Teacher	A	QT	NA	✔	-	-	-
FE Teacher 4	FE Teacher	A	QT	NA	✔	-	-	-
FE Teacher 5	FE Teacher	A	QT	NA	✔	-	-	-
FE Teacher 6	FE Teacher	A	QT	NA	✔	-	-	-
FE Teacher 7	FE Teacher	A	QT	NA	✔	-	-	-
FE Teacher 8	FE Teacher	A	QT	NA	✔	-	-	-
FE Teacher 9	FE Teacher	A	QT	NA	✔	-	-	-
FE Teacher 10	FE Teacher	A	QT	NA	✔	-	-	-
FE Teacher 11	FE Teacher	A	QT	NA	✔	-	-	-
FE Teacher 12	FE Teacher	A	QT	NA	✔	-	-	-
FE Teacher 13	FE Teacher	A	QT	NA	✔	-	-	-
FE Teacher 14	FE Teacher	A	QT	NA	✔	-	-	-
FE Teacher 15	FE Teacher	A	QT	NA	✔	-	-	-
FE Teacher 16	FE Teacher	A	QT	NA	✔	-	-	-
FE Teacher 17	FE Teacher	A	QT	NA	✔	-	-	-
NQT 1	FE Teacher	A	NQT	NA	✔	-	-	-

Pseudonym	Role	Organisation A – Case study B – Other provider	Status NQT/QT	PT ITT Student	Questionnaire (29)	Focus Group 1 (12)	Focus Group 2 (10)	Interview (5)
NQT 2	FE Teacher	A	NQT	NA	✔	-	-	-
NQT 3	FE Teacher	A	NQT	NA	✔	-	-	-
NQT 4	FE Teacher	A	NQT	NA	✔	-	-	-
FE Manager 1	FE Manager	A	QT	NA	✔	-	-	-
FE Manager 2	FE Manager	A	QT	NA	✔	-	-	-
FE Manager 3	FE Manager	A	QT	NA	✔	-	-	-
FE Manager 4	FE Manager	A	QT	NA	✔	-	-	-
FE Media Rep. 1	FE Media Rep.	A	NA	NA	✔	-	-	-
FE Student 1	FE Student	A	NA	NA	✔	-	-	-
FE Student 2	FE Student	A	NA	NA	✔	-	-	-
Parent of an FE Student 1	Parent of an FE Student	A	NA	NA	✔	-	-	-
Carol	FE Teacher	B	NQT	✔	-	✔	-	-
Andy	FE Teacher	B	NQT	✔	-	✔	-	-
Martin	FE Teacher	B	NQT	✔	-	✔	-	-
Valerie	FE Teacher	A	NQT	✔	-	✔	-	-
Hayley	FE Teacher	B	NQT	✔	-	✔	-	-
Carmel	FE Teacher	A	NQT	✔	-	✔	-	-
Cameron	FE Teacher	B	NQT	✔	-	✔	-	-
Miles	FE Teacher	B	NQT	✔	-	✔	-	-
Shaun	FE Teacher	B	NQT	✔	-	✔	-	-

Pseudonym	Role	Organisation A – Case study B – Other provider	Status NQT/QT	PT ITT Student	Questionnaire (29)	Focus Group 1 (12)	Focus Group 2 (10)	Interview (5)
Terry	FE Teacher	B	NQT	✔	-	✔	-	-
Len	FE Teacher	A	NQT	✔	-	✔	-	-
Heidi	FE Teacher	A	NQT	✔	-	✔	-	-
Karen	FE Teacher	A	QT	NA	-	-	✔	-
Bonnie	FE Teacher	A	QT	NA	-	-	✔	-
Sue	FE Teacher	A	QT	NA	-	-	✔	-
Sally	FE Teacher	A	QT	NA	-	-	✔	-
Anna	FE Teacher	A	QT	NA	-	-	✔	-
Sarah	FE Teacher	A	QT	NA	-	-	✔	-
Mel	FE Teacher	A	QT	NA	-	-	✔	-
Jean	FE Teacher	A	QT	NA	-	-	✔	-
Tara	FE Teacher	A	QT	NA	-	-	✔	-
Rachel	FE Teacher	A	QT	NA	-	-	✔	-
Robert	FE Teacher	A	QT	NA	-	-	-	✔
Ella	FE Teacher	A	QT	NA	-	-	-	✔
Kris	FE Teacher	A	QT	NA	-	-	-	✔
Mike	FE Teacher	A	NQT	✔	-	-	-	✔
Alan	FE Teacher	A	QT	NA	-	-	-	✔

Appendix IV Sample subject area and length of teaching service for focus groups and interviews

Pseudonym	Organisation type	Subject area	Length of teaching service (years)	Status NQT/QT	PT ITT Student	Focus Group 1 (12)	Focus Group 2 (10)	Interview (5)
Carol	School	Maths	15	NQT	✔	✔	-	-
Andy	Private training	Health	6	NQT	✔	✔	-	-
Martin	School	PE	2	NQT	✔	✔	-	-
Valerie	FE	Life Skills	5	NQT	✔	✔	-	-
Hayley	FE	Law	1	NQT	✔	✔	-	-
Carmel	FE & HE	1-1 coach	1	NQT	✔	✔	-	-
Cameron	FE	Design	3	NQT	✔	✔	-	-
Miles	FE	Health & Social Care	1	NQT	✔	✔	-	-
Shaun	School	Psychology	1	NQT	✔	✔	-	-
Terry	FE	Media	1	NQT	✔	✔	-	-
Len	FE & private training	Joinery	1	NQT	✔	✔	-	-
Heidi	FE	Fashion	2	NQT	✔	✔	-	-
Karen	FE & HE	English	15	QT	NA	-	✔	-
Bonnie	FE	English	25	QT	NA	-	✔	-
Sue	FE	English	10	QT	NA	-	✔	-
Sally	FE	Functional English	12	QT	NA	-	✔	-
Anna	FE	Functional English	5	QT	NA	-	✔	-
Sarah	FE	English	8	QT	NA	-	✔	-
Mel	FE	Maths	3	QT	NA	-	✔	-

Pseudonym	Organisation type	Subject area	Length of teaching service (years)	Status NQT/QT	PT ITT Student	Focus Group 1 (12)	Focus Group 2 (10)	Interview (5)
Jean	FE	Functional Maths	2	QT	NA	-	✔	-
Tara	FE	ESOL	15	QT	NA	-	✔	-
Rachel	FE	ESOL	20	QT	NA	-	✔	-
Robert	FE	Functional Maths	5	QT	NA	-	-	✔
Ella	FE & HE	ICT	5	QT	NA	-	-	✔
Kris	FE	Beauty	10	QT	NA	-	-	✔
Mike	FE & HE	Animal Care	4	NQT	✔	-	-	✔
Alan	FE	Construction Skills	2	QT	NA	-	-	✔

Appendix V Participant information sheet

PERCEPTIONS OF THE TEACHING PROFESSION IN FURTHER EDUCATION

Introduction

My name is Theresa Marriot and I am a Doctoral Student at The University of Lincoln. I would like to invite you to participate in my research; this information sheet briefly explains my research so that you can decide if you would like to participate.

What is 'Perceptions of the Teaching Profession In Further Education' about?

The main theme of the research is to explore if perceptions of teachers in Further Education (FE) impacts on FE Teachers themselves.

The main questions are to:

- Determine what FE teacher professionalism is
- Explore what influences perceptions of teacher professionalism and why
- Review the effect perceptions have on FE teachers
- Identify boundaries of professionalism
- Discuss how important professionalism is to FE teachers
- Examine if opinions on professionalism are different depending on your position within the sector.

What are the aims of the research?

The aims of the research are to:

- Explore and identify what constitutes FE teacher professionalism
- Investigate and examine the factors that may influence perceptions of FE teachers
- Evaluate if perceptions have any effect on FE teachers themselves
- Identify if there are opportunities for perceptions of FE teachers to be improved and contribute to discourse on FE teacher professionalism:
- Provide FE teachers a voice through publication of my work
- In practice the research will contribute towards development of professionalism modules in Teacher Education and the production of resources to support and develop coaching and mentors of FE teachers

Who else is and can be involved?

The research will involve different groups of people: FE teachers, students

over 18 years old on Initial Teacher Training Courses, FE managers, Education Media Representatives, FE students over 18 years old and parents of students who are studying at the FE provider. The research will take place within one college.

You are being invited to participate in order to provide a wide cross section of views regarding FE teacher professionalism. You have been selected as you have direct links to FE as a provider of education and your participation will contribute to a variety of perspectives on FE teacher professionalism.

What sorts of methods are being used?

The project involves a case study of a FE provider situated in the North East. The research will be carried out over a period of up to two years and has already involved an initial pilot study.

Initially questionnaires will be used to determine themes and areas to investigate further. Unstructured interviews and focus groups will be used afterwards to gain information in more depth.

What are you being asked to do?

You are being asked to complete a questionnaire, take part in one to one unstructured interviews and be part of a focus group (you may not be asked to participate in all of the research activities); you will be informed once research starts of which activities I would like you to participate in.

To take part in the research you will need to provide informed consent (see separate sheet), which states that you agree to take part in the research. If you are taking part in interviews/focus groups then you will be consenting to being audio recorded and may be quoted (anonymously) in the final publication.

Interviews will be carried out face to face on a one to one basis and focus groups will involve participants (up to 5) who belong to the same group as you e.g. parents. Interviews and focus groups are anticipated to take approximately an hour of your time for each one.

Do you have to take part?

Your participation is important to determine what individuals think an FE professional is, but you have the right to withdraw at any time up to the point of writing up research. All data will be anonymised prior to writing up the research.

By responding electronically to the questionnaire you are providing informed consent and do not need to complete or sign a consent form. Please read the consent form though as it details the expectations of the researcher if you participate.

Who will benefit from this research, and how?

Beneficiaries may be:

- Those that go into teaching/are new to teaching in FE as it may give them an insight into what constitutes a teaching professional in FE
- Students and parents of students studying in FE as it may raise their awareness of the profession and the impact of their own perceptions on teachers themselves
- FE teachers/managers as it may offer an emotional insight into the profession and give a 'voice' to an under represented group. It may also improve perceptions of FE teachers and the profession
- Teaching professionals in the FE sector as a whole as the findings may contribute to developing the perceptions and status of the profession
- Teacher Education students for development of the Professionalism modules which form part of the course in addition to supporting resource development for teacher coaches and mentors

Who is funding this research?

This research is self-funded from 2013 to the present. A partial contribution was made by *** during 2014.

Who can I contact for more information?

Theresa Marriott – Doctoral Student **********

Dr Joss Winn – Supervisor jwinn@lincoln.ac.uk

Appendix VI Participant consent form

PERCEPTIONS OF THE TEACHING PROFESSION IN FURTHER EDUCATION

Agreement to Participate – <u>For your information only if responding electronically, this does not require completion</u>

Please read the statements below and complete your responses:

1. I have read the participant information sheet describing the nature and purpose of the research and I agree to take part.

Yes ☐ No ☐

2. I have received enough information about the research to make an informed decision about participating in it.

Yes ☐ No ☐

3. I understand that I may withdraw from the research project at any stage prior to writing up the findings.

Yes ☐ No ☐

4. I understand that the data gathered from me will be anonymised, I will not be identified and my personal data will remain confidential.

Yes ☐ No ☐

5. I understand that I will be audio recorded during interviews/focus group participation and I may terminate the recording at any time.

Yes ☐ No ☐

6. I understand that my data will be held confidentially in a secure place and on a password protected computer in the form of hard and electronic copies of transcripts and audio tapes. This data will be accessible to the researcher only.

Yes ☐ No ☐

7. Would you like to be informed about the research findings on completion?

Yes ☐ No ☐

8. I agree to contribute to this research.

Yes ☐ No ☐

Your signature/verbal consent indicates that you have decided to take part in this project after considering the information provided, and that you know you can raise questions and decide not to participate at any time prior to writing up the findings.

Signature/verbal consent _____ **Date** _____

Name _____

Email/contact _____

For more information contact:

Researcher - Theresa Marriott, The University of Lincoln, **********

Supervisor - Dr Joss Winn, The University of Lincoln, jwinn@lincoln.ac.uk

Appendix VII Pilot questionnaire questions

Teacher Professionalism in Further Education (FE)

A short survey to determine your thoughts about teacher professionalism in FE (more commonly referred to as college)

* Required

1. Please indicate your age bracket *

18-21
22-30
31-40
41-50
51-60
61-70
71-80
80+

2. Please tell me your status *

FE Teacher
Trainee Teacher/Newly Qualified Teacher (NQT)
Parent/Guardian
Student

3. Would you say that your personal experience of education has been:

Positive
Negative
A mixture of both
Neither of these

4. Can you define what professionalism in FE (college) teaching is?

Yes
No

5. Please give your definition below. If you are unable to give a definition please add why this is not possible

6. Please select as many as you like from the list below which you feel are characteristics of a professional FE (college) teacher (check all that apply)

Belongs to a professional organisation
Autonomous - free to do what you want
Qualified
Trusted

Knowledgeable
Ethical
Responsible
Accountable
Competent
Reflective
Altruistic - Selfless, helps others

7. Are there any other characteristics that you feel a professional FE (college) teacher should have?

8. Please name up to 3 professions which you consider of a similar status to teaching in FE (college)

9. What is your opinion of teachers in FE (college)?

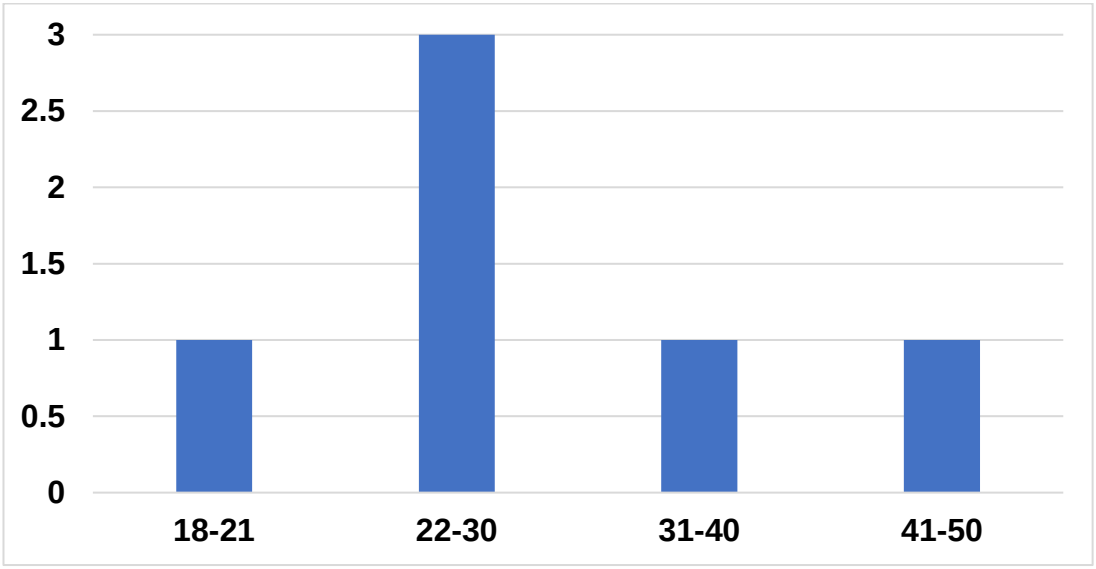
10. Please tell me if there is anything that influences your thoughts/opinions on teachers in FE (college)

11. Do you think that the status of FE (college) teachers is important? Yes or no - please explain

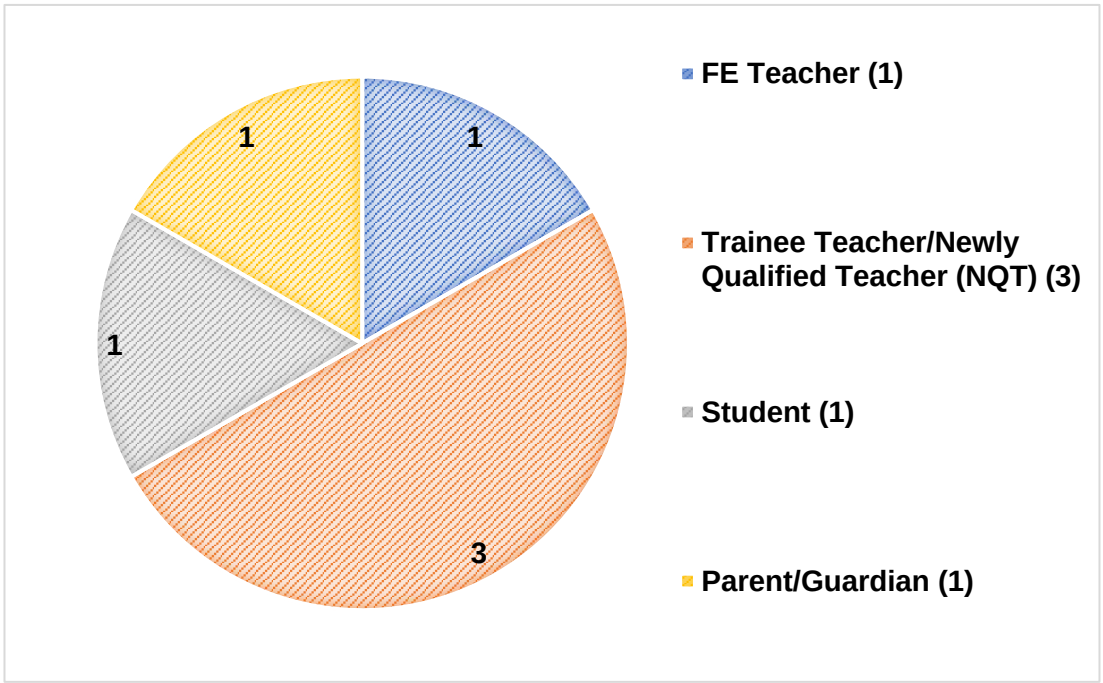
12. Do you think FE (college) teachers are portrayed in a positive or negative light? Can you explain why or give examples below

Appendix VIII Pilot questionnaire data

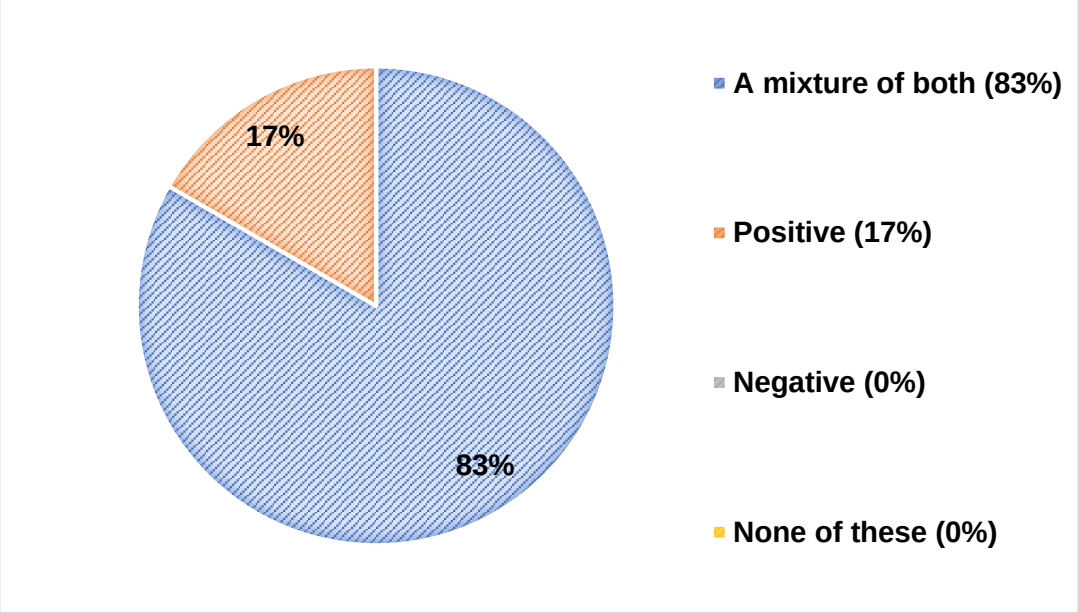
1. Please indicate your age bracket.



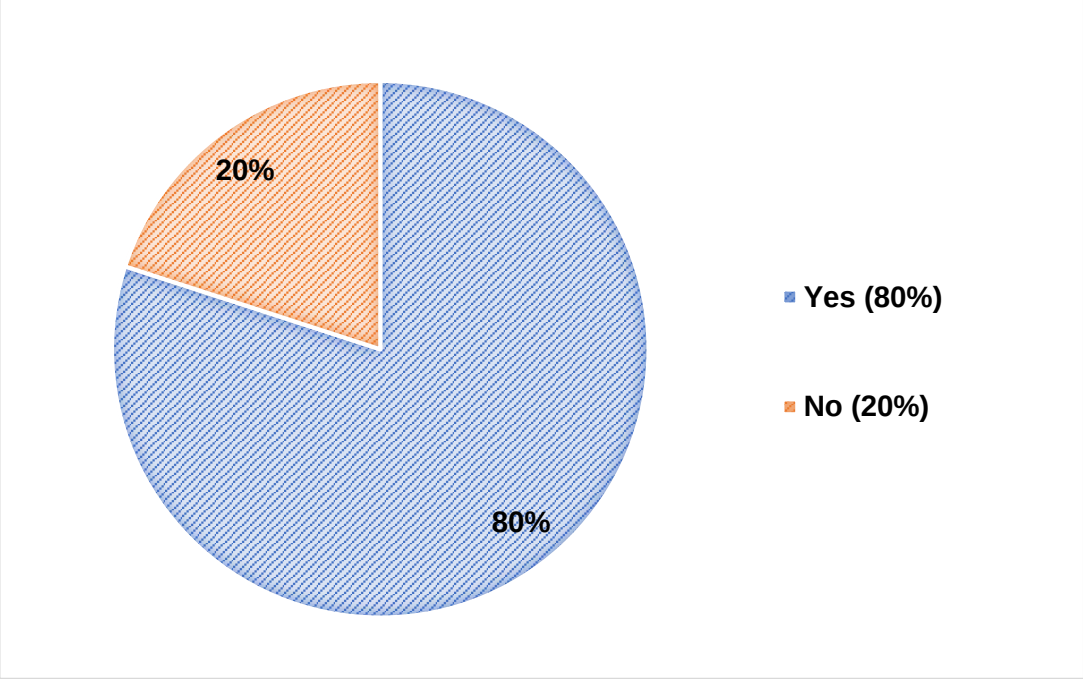
2. Please tell me your status.



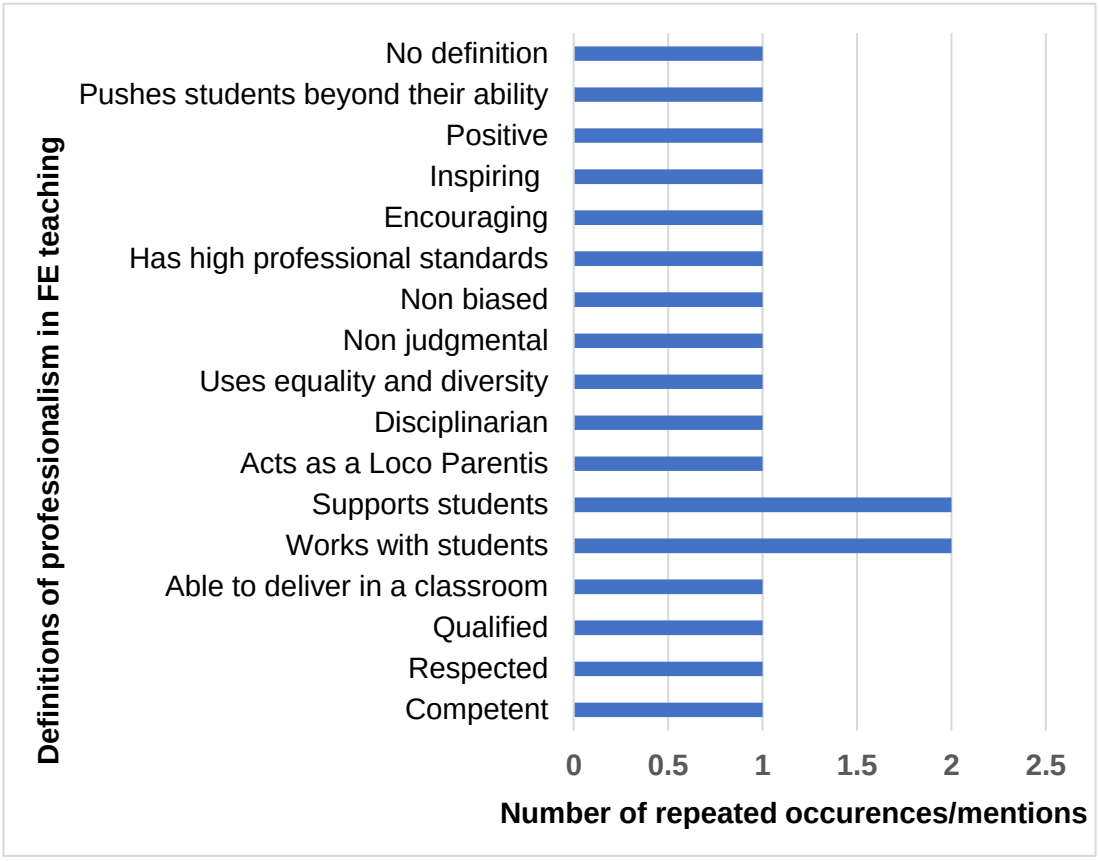
3. Would you say your personal experience of education has been:



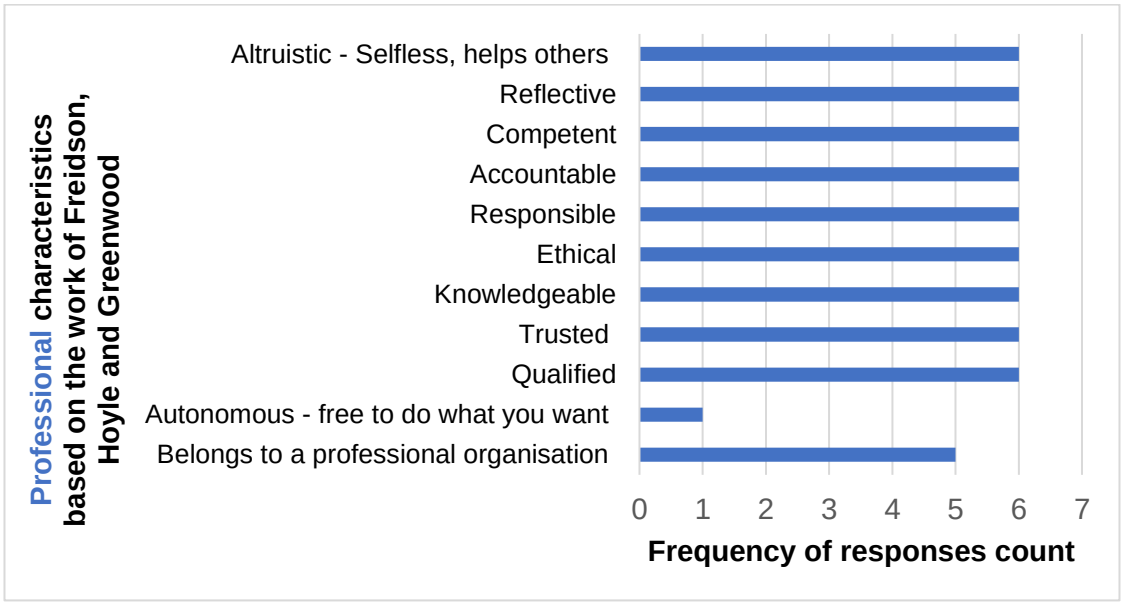
4. Can you define what professionalism in FE (college) teaching is?



5. Please give your definition below. If you are unable to give a definition please add why this is not possible.



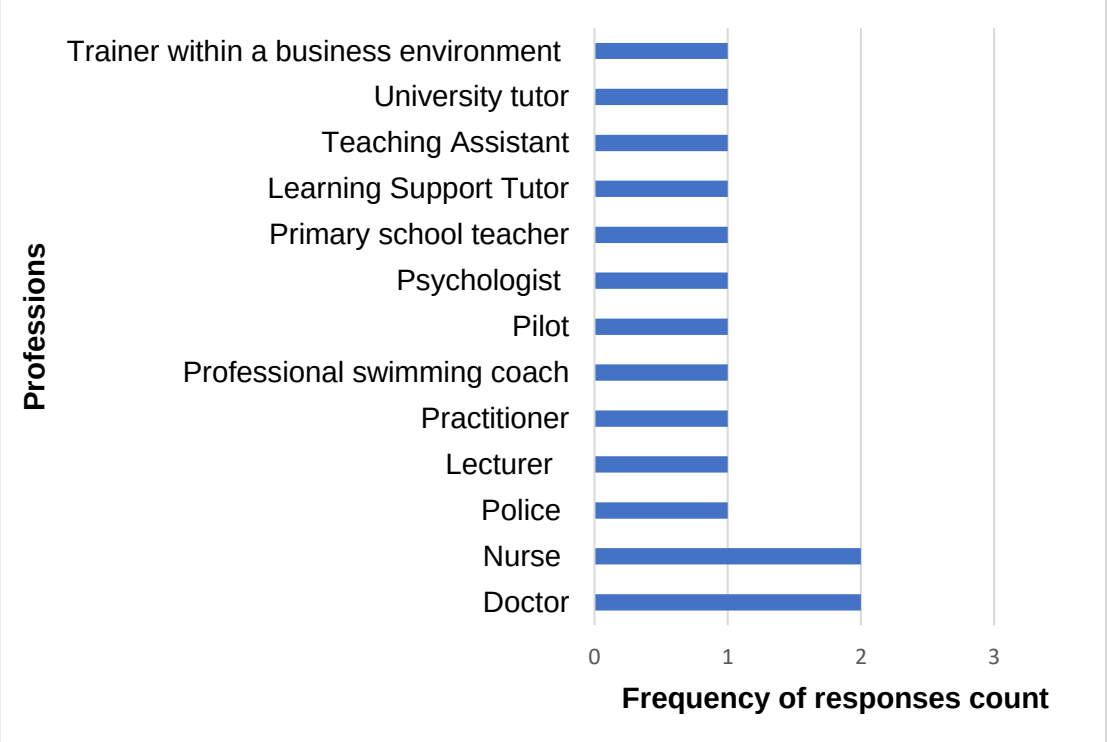
6. Please select as many as you like from the list below which you feel are characteristics of a professional FE (college) teacher (check all that apply).



7. Are there any other characteristics that you feel a professional FE (college) teacher should have?

Status	Additional characteristics provided
QT	Creative Innovative
Trainee/NQT	No response
Trainee/NQT	No response
Student	Positive attitude Encouraging Inspiring Good personality Approachable.
Trainee/NQT	Approachable Humour Honest Reliable
Parent/Guardian	Non judgemental Non biased

8. Please name up to three professions which you consider of a similar status to teaching in FE (college).



9. What is your opinion of teachers in FE (college)?

Status	Responses
QT	We are seen as a 'lesser' teacher, one that you do not have to be qualified to get into
Trainee/NQT	Very approachable Knowledgeable Selfless to help others at all times
Trainee/NQT	It is a challenging environment
Student	I found my college teachers really inspiring Motivating Incredibly encouraging even though I worked really hard and achieved high marks they would always push me to the next step
Trainee/NQT	Need higher levels of qualifications Need behaviour management training/ skills
Parent/ Guardian	Have an exceptional amount of responsibility and too many restraints i.e. not able to administer discipline as required Expected to work extra hours which encroach on their personal life

10. Please tell me if there is anything that influences your thoughts/ opinions on teachers in FE (college).

Status	Influences
QT	The government and funding cuts
Trainee/NQT	No response
Trainee/NQT	My own reflections influence my opinions
Student	Their experiences and work experience and attitude
Trainee/NQT	Working with them and observing them in practice. Acknowledging bad practice. Applying theory to practice
Parent/ Guardian	I have friends and relations who are teachers in this capacity

11. Do you think that the status of FE (college) teachers is important?

Status	Influences
QT	As mentioned before, our status isn't as grand as in primary or secondary
Trainee/NQT	No response
Trainee/NQT	Yes, because it helps you to contribute to society
Student	Yes
Trainee/NQT	Yes I think the status is important as it reflects on the organisation. e.g. if the staff are not suitably qualified /lack relevant skills this can result in a negative reputation within the community
Parent/ Guardian	Yes extremely important. At this present time it is essential to have qualifications in order to work. The job market is highly competitive and therefore to have relevant qualifications is essential. It also boosts confidence and open doors to those who would not necessarily consider certain areas of employment themselves

12. Do you think FE (college) teachers are portrayed in a positive or negative light? Can you explain why or give examples below.

Status	Influences
QT	In some respects - both. We are seen as having the students not 'bright enough' for A-levels and uni, this can be taken both positively and negatively
Trainee/NQT	I think college lecturers are portrayed in mostly a positive light
Trainee/NQT	Depending of the socio economical back ground of the college this varies
Student	Certain ones yes due to students experiences with them
Trainee/NQT	Mixed - Personal perspectives may be linked to how well the student achieves, the relationship with the tutor and the students own motivation to learn. Negative portrayal may come from isolated incidents or media portrayal
Parent/ Guardian	I personally think they should be given a medal for the work they do and believe they do an excellent job with very little support. Thy deal with children from all backgrounds and educationally at very different levels and yet still get results

Appendix IX Exploratory questionnaire questions

Teacher Professionalism in Further Education (FE)

A short questionnaire to determine your thoughts about teacher professionalism in FE (more commonly referred to as college)

* Required

1. Please indicate your age bracket *

18-21
22-30
31-40
41-50
51-60
61-70
71-80
80+

2. Please tell me your status *

FE Manager
FE Teacher
Trainee Teacher/Newly Qualified Teacher (NQT)
Parent/Guardian
Student
Media Representative

3. Can you give a definition of what you think Further Education is?

4. Can you list the characteristics of a professional in general

5. Can you define what a professional FE (college) teacher is?

6. Please give your definition below. If you are unable to give a definition please add why this is not possible

7. Please list what you think are the top three characteristics/qualities of an FE Teacher

8. Are there any other characteristics that you feel a professional FE (college) teacher should have?

9. Please rate the status of FE Teachers compared to other types of teachers - 1 is the highest status and 6 is the lowest status

FE teachers
HE teachers
Secondary school teachers
Junior school teachers
Infant/nursery school teachers
Private school teachers

10. Can you name anything that may influence the way FE Teachers act/carry out their roles?

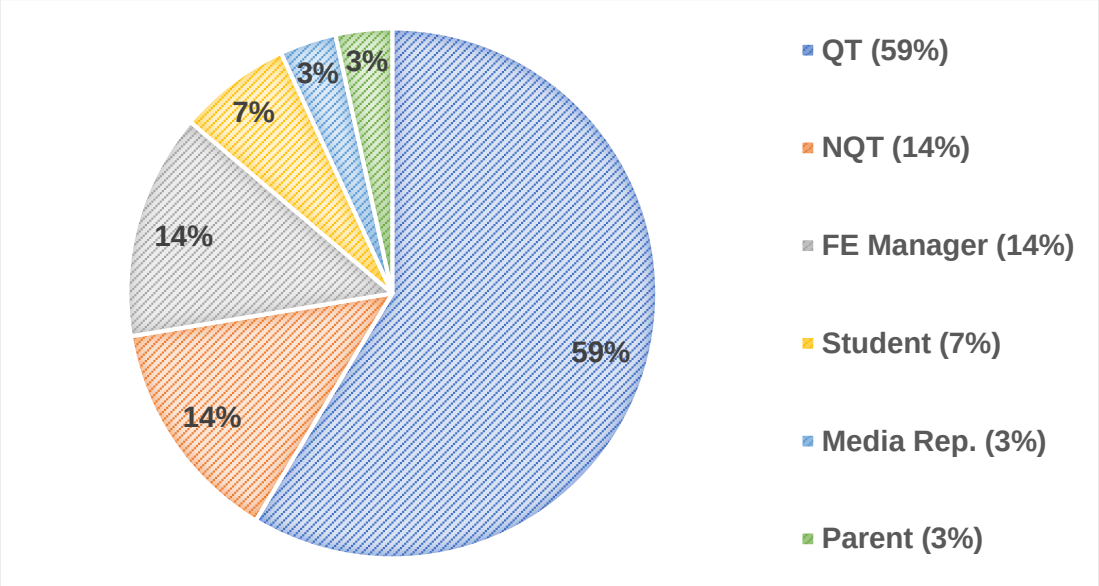
11. Please tell me if there is anything that influences the way you view FE (college) teachers?

Appendix X Exploratory questionnaire data

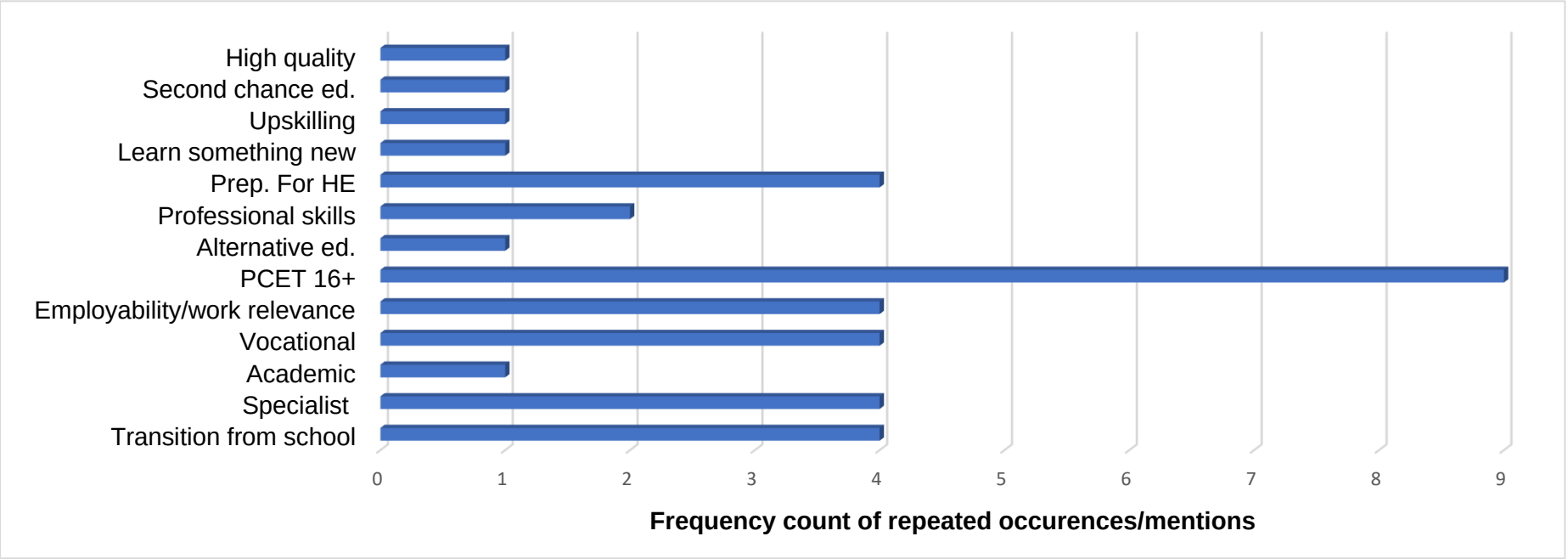
1. Please tell me your age.

Status	22-30	31-40	41-50	51-60
QT	3	5	5	4
NQT	1	2	1	0
Manager	1	1	1	1
Media Rep.	0	1	0	0
Parent/Guardian	0	1	0	0
Student	2	0	0	0
Totals	**7**	**10**	**7**	**7**

2. Please tell me your status.



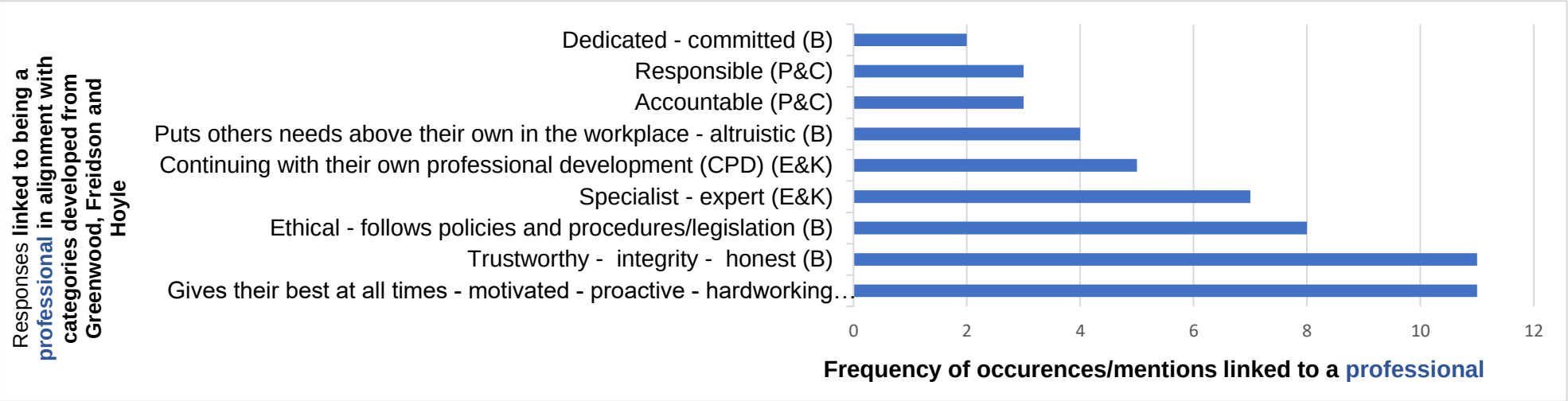
3. Can you give a definition of what you think Further Education is?

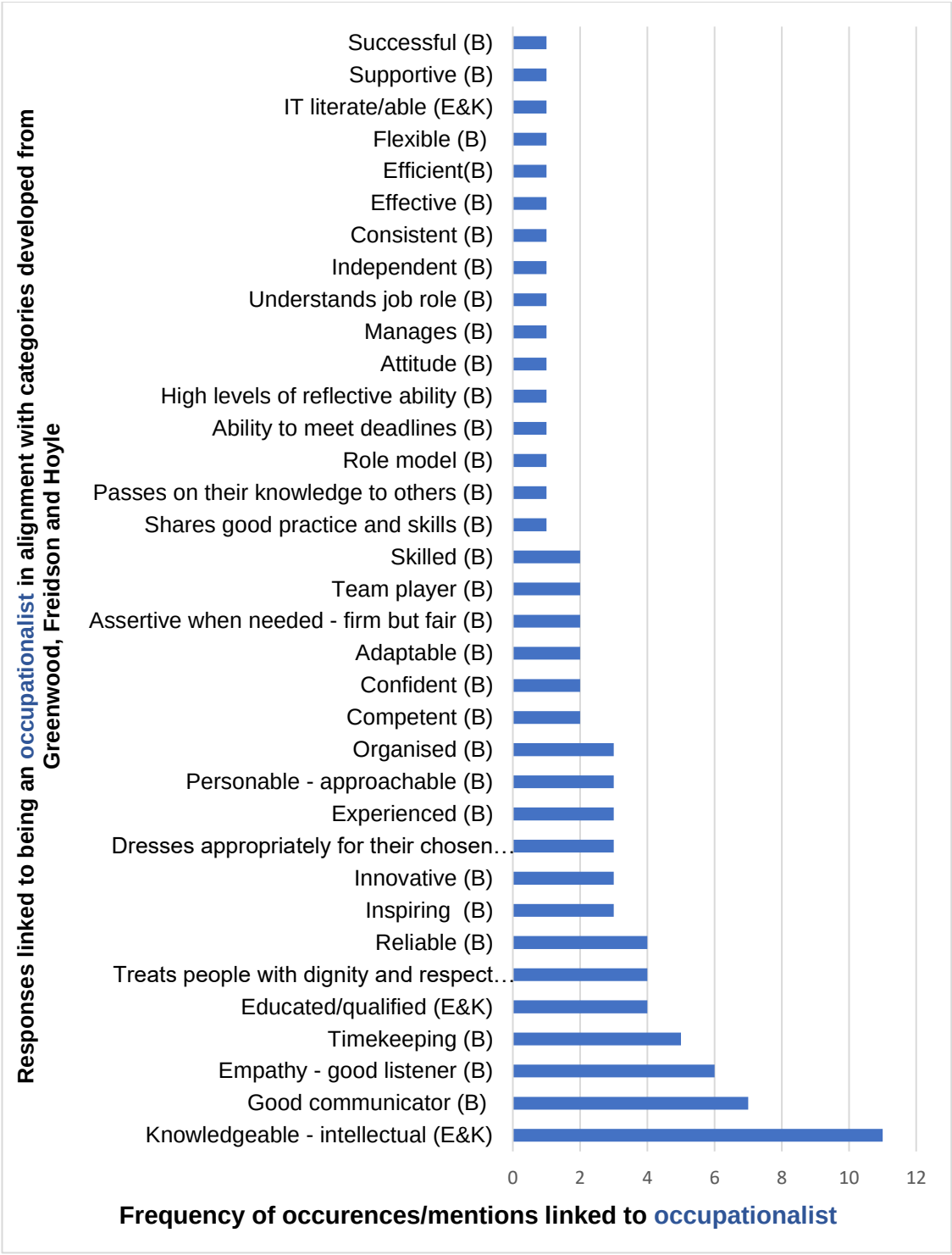


4. Can you list the characteristics of a professional in general?

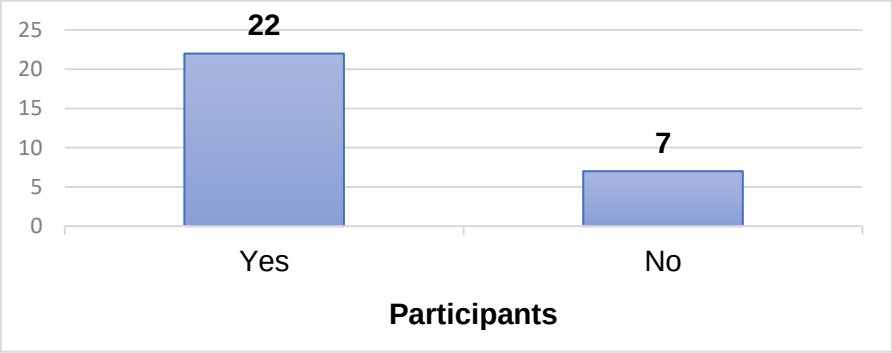
Please note the abbreviations in the following charts:

Behaviour (B)
Power and control (P&C)
Education and knowledge (E&K)

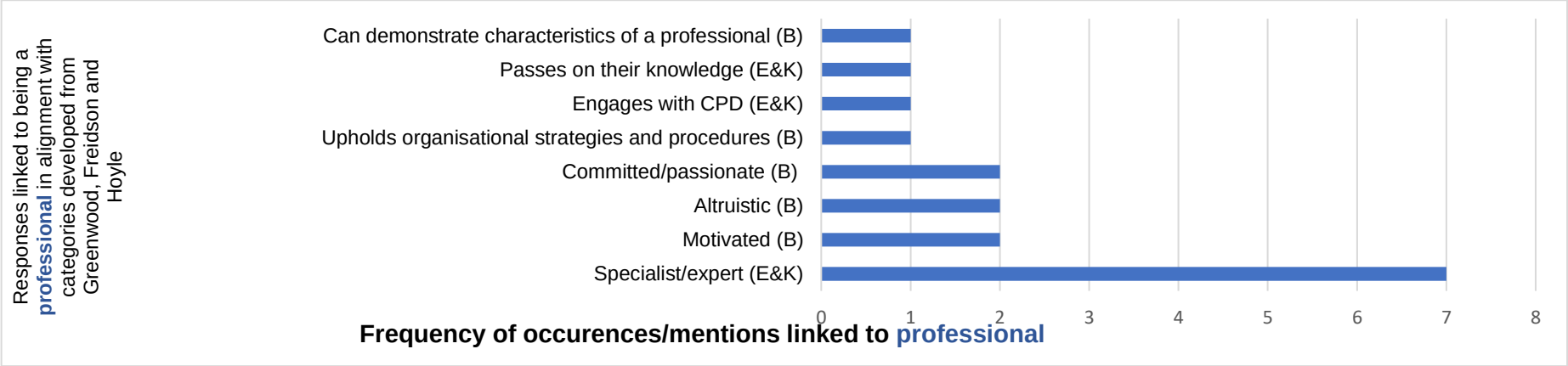


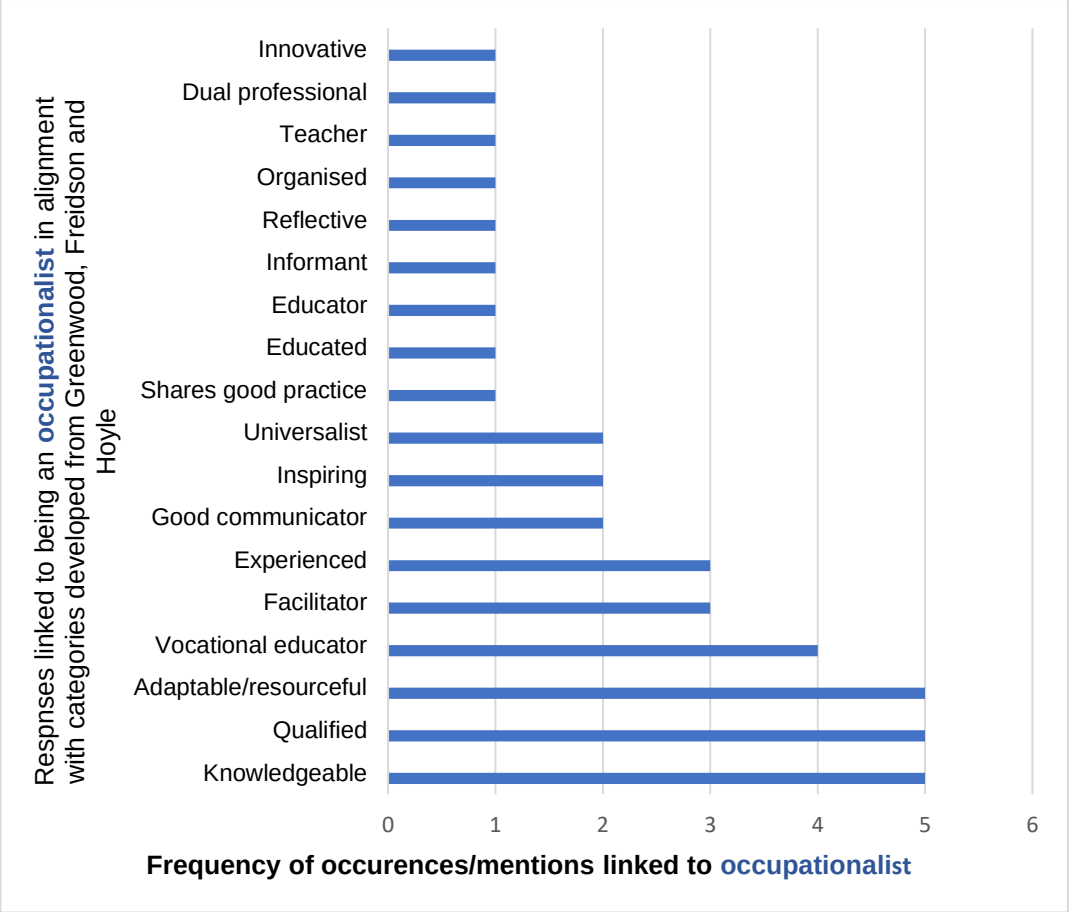

Responses linked to being an occupationalist in alignment with categories developed from Greenwood, Freidson and Hoyle
Successful (B)
Supportive (B)
IT literate/able (E&K)
Flexible (B)
Efficient(B)
Effective (B)
Consistent (B)
Independent (B)
Understands job role (B)
Manages (B)
Attitude (B)
High levels of reflective ability (B)
Ability to meet deadlines (B)
Role model (B)
Passes on their knowledge to others (B)
Shares good practice and skills (B)
Skilled (B)
Team player (B)
Assertive when needed - firm but fair (B)
Adaptable (B)
Confident (B)
Competent (B)
Organised (B)
Personable - approachable (B)
Experienced (B)
Dresses appropriately for their chosen…
Innovative (B)
Inspiring (B)
Reliable (B)
Treats people with dignity and respect…
Educated/qualified (E&K)
Timekeeping (B)
Empathy - good listener (B)
Good communicator (B)
Knowledgeable - intellectual (E&K)
0
2
4
6
8
10
12
Frequency of occurences/mentions linked to occupationalist

5. Can you define what a professional FE (college) teacher is?

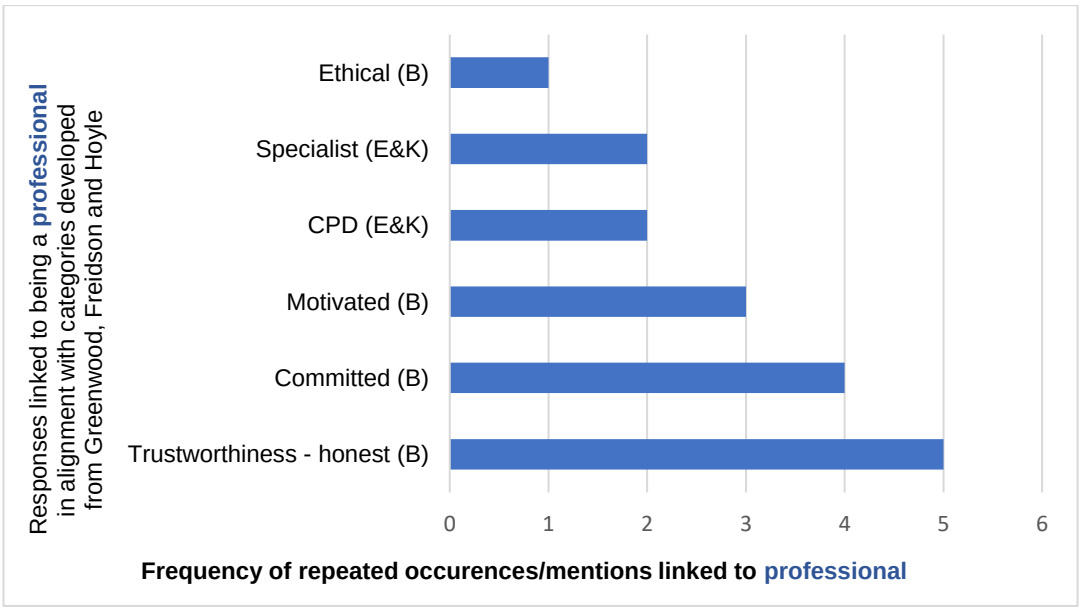


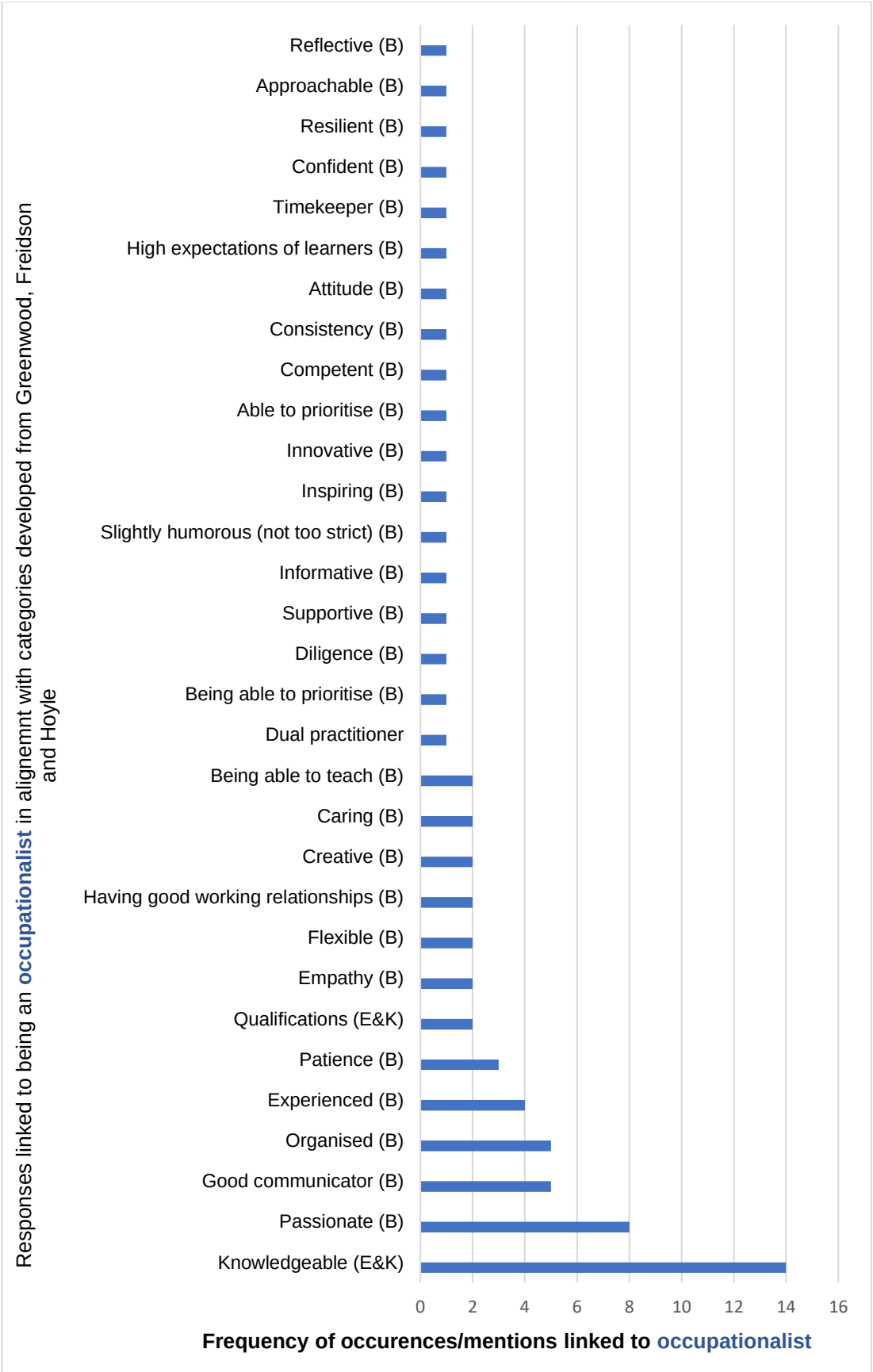
6. Please give your definition below of a professional FE (college) teacher. If you are unable to give a definition please add why this is not possible.





7. Please list what you think are the top three characteristics/ qualities of an FE teacher.




Responses linked to being an occupationalist in alignemnt with categories developed from Greenwood, Freidson and Hoyle
Reflective (B)
Approachable (B)
Resilient (B)
Confident (B)
Timekeeper (B)
High expectations of learners (B)
Attitude (B)
Consistency (B)
Competent (B)
Able to prioritise (B)
Innovative (B)
Inspiring (B)
Slightly humorous (not too strict) (B)
Informative (B)
Supportive (B)
Diligence (B)
Being able to prioritise (B)
Dual practitioner
Being able to teach (B)
Caring (B)
Creative (B)
Having good working relationships (B)
Flexible (B)
Empathy (B)
Qualifications (E&K)
Patience (B)
Experienced (B)
Organised (B)
Good communicator (B)
Passionate (B)
Knowledgeable (E&K)
0
2
4
6
8
10
12
14
16
Frequency of occurences/mentions linked to occupationalist

8. Are there any other characteristics that you feel a professional FE (college) teacher should have? (additional responses).

Responses linked to being a **professional** in alignment with categories developed from Greenwood, Freidson and Hoyle	
Characteristic/s	Corresponding category
Current English and maths knowledge	Education and knowledge
Control - ability to say no Risk taker	Power and control

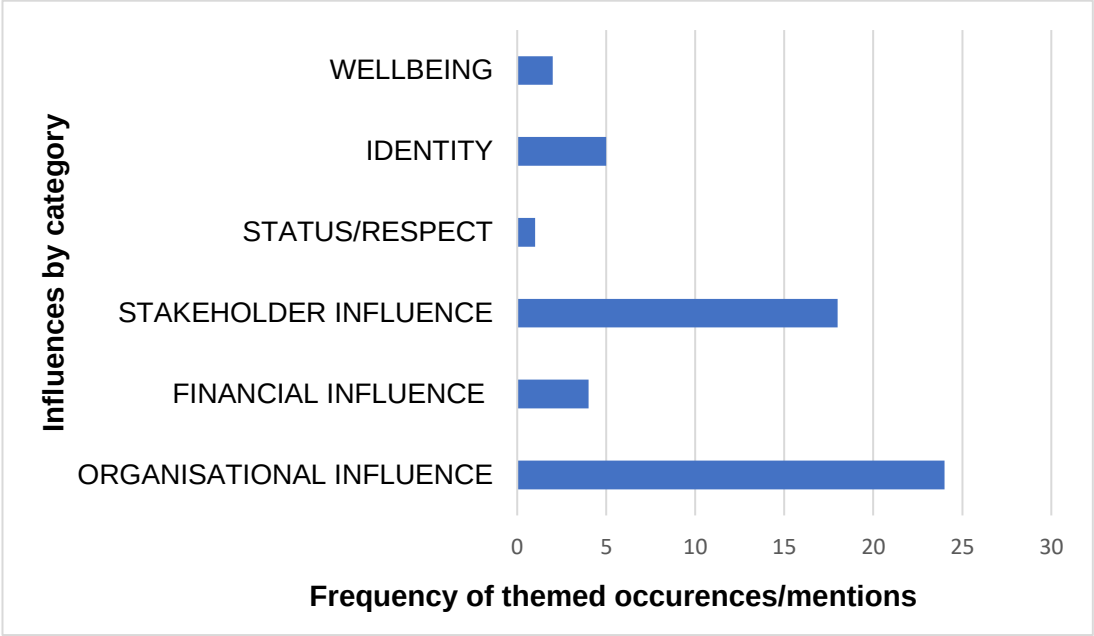
Responses linked to being an **occupationalist** in alignment with categories developed from Greenwood, Freidson and Hoyle	
Characteristic/s	Corresponding category
Meet deadlines Calmness Hands on – practical Friendly Determined Promotes E&D Humour/banter	Behaviour

9. Please rate the status of FE Teachers compared to other types of teachers - 1 is the highest status and 6 is the lowest status.

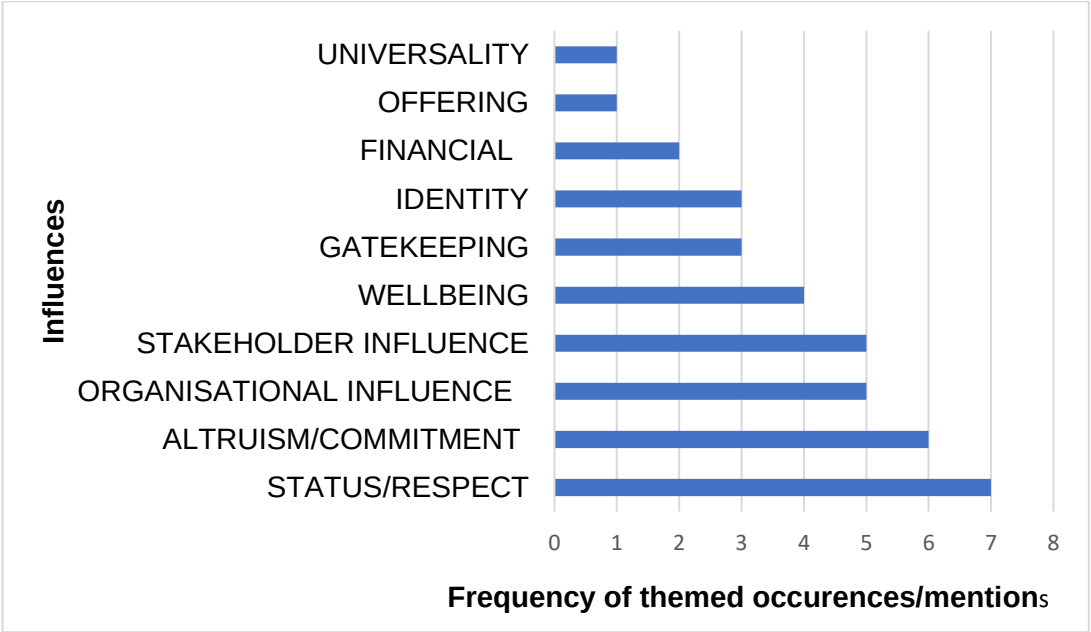
Status level	Status of FE teachers overall	Total counts per section
Highest 1	**4**	**9**
2	**5**	
3	**7**	**11**
4	**4**	
5	**4**	**7**
Lowest 6	**3**	

Status of FE teachers compared to...	HE teachers	Total counts per section	Secondary school teachers	Total counts per section	Junior school teachers	Total counts per section	Infant/ nursery school teachers	Total counts per section	Private school teachers	Total counts per section
Highest 1	4	12	6	10	4	11	5	10	6	11
2	8		4		7		5		5	
3	3	8	3	10	1	8	6	13	4	9
4	5		7		7		7		5	
5	5	7	3	7	3	6	2	4	6	7
Lowest 6	2		4		3		2		1	

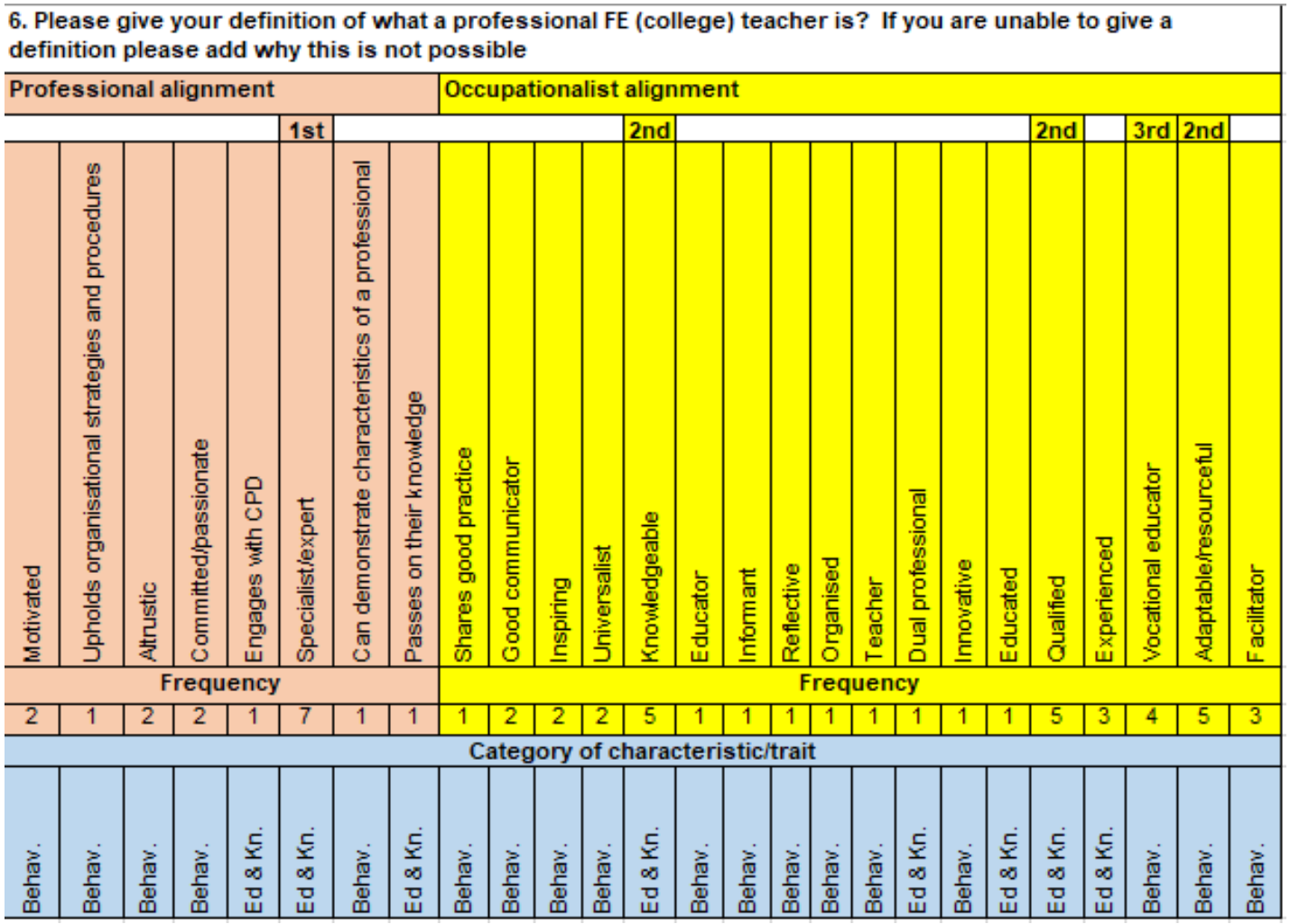
10. Can you name anything that may influence the way FE Teachers act/carry out their roles?



11. Please tell me if there is anything that influences the way you view FE (college) teachers?



Appendix XI Exploratory questionnaire data analysis sample



6. Please give your definition of what a professional FE (college) teacher is? If you are unable to give a definition please add why this is not possible																														
Professional alignment									Occupationalist alignment																					
					1st								2nd								2nd		3rd	2nd						
Motivated	Upholds organisational strategies and procedures	Altrustic	Committed/passionate	Engages with CPD	Specialist/expert	Can demonstrate characteristics of a professional	Passes on their knowledge	Shares good practice	Good communicator	Inspiring	Universalist	Knowledgeable	Educator	Informant	Reflective	Organised	Teacher	Dual professional	Innovative	Educated	Qualified	Experienced	Vocational educator	Adaptable/resourceful	Facilitator					
Frequency									Frequency																					
2	1	2	2	1	7	1	1	1	2	2	2	5	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	5	3	4	5	3					
Category of characteristic/trait																														
Behav.	Behav.	Behav.	Behav.	Ed & Kn.	Ed & Kn.	Behav.	Ed & Kn.	Behav.	Behav.	Behav.	Behav.	Ed & Kn.	Behav.	Behav.	Behav.	Behav.	Behav.	Ed & Kn.	Behav.	Ed & Kn.	Ed & Kn.	Ed & Kn.	Behav.	Behav.	Behav.					

Appendix XII Sample of combined data coded themes

NQT) FOCUS GROUP, (QT) FOCUS GROUP, NQT/QT (MIX) INTERVIEWS

NO.	CODE	FREQ.	NO.	THEME	FREQ.
1	In the first instance, media portrayal of professions/professional is generic and overarching all professions/professionals	NQT 3	1	MEDIA INFLUENCE/PORTRAYAL/OBSERVATION	NQT 67 MIX 7
2	A professional is defined by a set of characteristics	NQT 14 QT 3 MIX 12	2	DEFINED CHARACTERISTICS OF A PROFESSIONAL - MACRO	NQT 126 QT 20 MIX 119

Overall themes across the data

RANK ORDER

1ST	612	10	POWER/CONTROL	NQT 333 QT 78 MIX 201
2ND	607	4	IDENTITY	NQT 238 QT 70 MIX
3RD	533	5	GATEKEEPING/DEPROFESSIONALISATION	NQT 250 QT 75 MIX 208
4TH	302	7	STATUS/RESPECT	NQT 174 QT 45 MIX 83
5TH	265	2	DEFINED CHARACTERISTICS OF A PROFESSIONAL - MACRO	NQT 126 QT 20 MIX 119
6TH	129	9	DEVIANCE	NQT 95 QT 7 MIX 27
7TH	126	8	PROFESSIONALISM IS DIFFICULT TO DEFINE	NQT 91 QT 12 MIX 23
8TH	86	3	DEFINED CHARACTERISTICS OF A PROFESSIONAL – MICRO	NQT 85 QT 50 MIX 83 105
9TH	74	1	MEDIA INFLUENCE/PORTRAYAL/OBSERVATION	NQT 67 MIX 7
10TH	5	6	IS TEACHING A PROFESSION OR VOCATION?	NQT 2 QT 1 MIX 2

Appendix XIII Ngram illustrating the frequency of the words ‘teacher professionalism’ and ‘teacher identity’ within literature between 1960 – 2008